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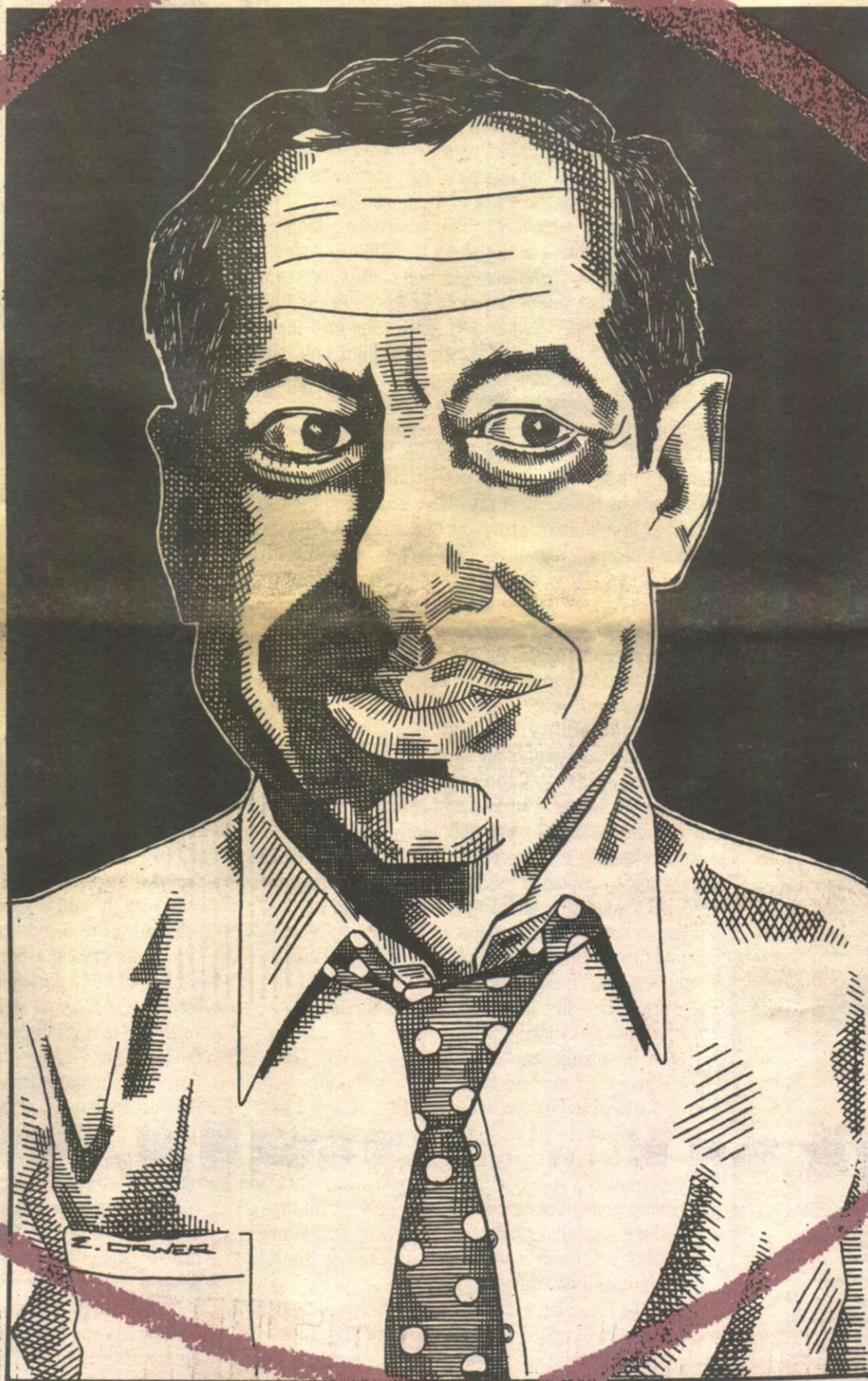
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DRAFTING CUOMO

Riding a
dark horse or
beating a
dead horse?

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With Jackson out, black vote uncertain

By Salim Muwakkil

As the presidential campaign heats up, the candidates for the Democratic nomination are gingerly pitching their wares to the African-American electorate. Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder's January exit from the fray erased racial solidarity as a campaign strategy for the first time since

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1984 when Jesse Jackson launched the first of his two presidential runs. This development has provided the remaining candidates an opportunity to woo black support through their stands on issues.

They have rarely taken that opportunity. Instead, the five major contenders have been busy chanting the "middle-class relief" line that has become the mantra of the 1992 campaign. They have apparently abandoned attempts to address problems like those attendant to poverty and the declining quality of life in the nation's inner-cities, issues traditionally considered important to Democrats.

The candidates seem almost oblivious to the crisis conditions—in education, housing, health care, crime, AIDS, drug abuse—afflicting African-American communities across the country. Even Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), who is considered the strongest defender of the Democrats' liberal tradition, has failed to focus on these crucial concerns.

Compassion fatigue: Despite the Democratic candidates' lack of attention to these issues, black political leaders have been strangely mute in their criticism. In fact, many African-American politicians were quick to jump on the now tottering bandwagon of Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, the candidate who appears to be least attentive to their constituents' peculiar problems.

Some analysts explain this puzzling behavior as a pragmatic concession to the tenor of the times. The U.S. electorate is beset by a malady called "compassion fatigue," they argue, and thus are less likely to support candidates who champion the disadvantaged. Poll results increasingly are revealing that voters are "tired of the homeless, tired of poor people," said Robert Borosage of the Institute for Policy Studies, a left-leaning Washington think tank. "It's an indication of just how successful the conservatives have been in pushing their agenda."

Sensing this public mood, some black political leaders have become more concerned with issues of electability than with those of ideological compatibility. "It's really no secret why the political pros have embraced Clinton," explained Ron Walters, professor of political science at Howard University and adviser on Jackson's two presidential campaigns. "They smell the blood of a vulnerable Republican incumbent and they want to assure their personal access to the next president by hooking up with the candidate who seems the most electable. From the look of things, though, they may pay a steep price for their early action."

Bye-bye electability: In the wake of stories about his extramarital affair and his anti-draft sentiments during the Vietnam conflict, Clinton's aura of electability is fading rapidly. And since that aura was his most attractive feature to victory-starved black politicians, some are pulling away and looking elsewhere. Burned by charges that their initial choice was fueled more by opportunism than principle, it's a good bet black leaders will be a bit more prudent in lending their support to former California Gov. Edmund (Jerry) Brown, Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, former Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts or Harkin. There are some—like Rep. Mike Espy of Mississippi—however, who are sticking with Clinton.

"Too many people leaped before they looked," said Frank Watkins, a longtime Jackson aide and policy guru for the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC). "These candidates are untested." He said the early groundswell for Clinton was bad strategy because none of the candidates had yet detailed a stand on issues important to black and progressive constituencies. In fact, the only forum that afforded the candidates a chance to directly address the concerns of progressives was one sponsored by the NRC last January 25 in Washington, D.C.

"All of the candidates showed up at the forum, and all of them received a good reception from the coalition delegates in the audience," Watkins said. He noted, however, that Clinton was booed when his support for Arkansas' "right-to-work" laws was mentioned. Clinton was also criticized for his support for capital punishment, Watkins said. The night before the candidates' forum convened, Clinton was in his home state overseeing the January 24 execution of Ricky Ray Rector, a retarded black man convicted of killing a white police officer. In a statement regarding the Rector execution, Jackson said, "The killing of the man was not a moral imperative, nor was it a matter of public safety. It was a political calculation."

The candidates & the rainbow: Still, Clinton was

welcomed warmly to the NRC affair by Jackson. Basking in the media glare of his front-runner status, the Arkansas governor noted his differences with the NRC delegates on the death penalty and went on to wow them with his attacks on Republican race-baiting. All of the candidates made the requisite political gestures to please that particular audience, and they all arranged photo ops with the beaming Jackson.

"Looking at the candidates, issue by issue, Harkin seems by far the obvious choice," noted David Bositis, senior analyst of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based think tank that focuses on issues of interest to African-Americans. "And that was demonstrated very clearly at the candidates' forum. From where I sat, Harkin's proposals received the best reception." He expressed amazement that Clinton, who is former chairman of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), has accumulated such a wide range of black support.

"The notion that he is the most electable of the candidates was always faulty," Bositis said. "The media projected that image because he had courted the media so successfully. But when you examine the notion, it breaks down." Bositis said that Clinton's presumed electability is

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based largely on his identity as a Southerner. "But Bush is virtually unbeatable in the most important states of Florida, Texas and Georgia, so the idea that Democrats could offset the incumbent's appeal in the South by nominating a Southerner like Clinton was an idea that was never well thought out."

Bositis said he is perplexed by the strategy of Jackson's NRC. Since Harkin's positions are closer to Jackson's than any of the other candidates', with the possible exception of Jerry Brown, why is he withholding his endorsement of Harkin's candidacy? "Now that Clinton is being cut down by the tabloid media and leaks about his draft record, the candidates are bunched together in a kind of undifferentiated mass. Harkin could certainly do much better if Jesse supported him. But for some reason he's made up his mind not to endorse anyone."

No Jackson endorsement: The NRC's Watkins said it's too soon to commit to any particular candidate. Although he agreed that Harkin is the candidate most in accord with the NRC's principles, Watkins said the Iowa senator had yet to demonstrate his ability to attract support. "We're not casting aspersions on Harkin or anything, but why should Rev. Jackson put his credibility on the line for someone who hasn't shown they're able to sell themselves yet?" The best strategy is to push the NRC agenda in all of the candidates' camps, he said. The NRC will wait to see how the candidates fare in the various primary states and then decide—maybe. "We may or may not endorse a candidate before the convention," Watkins said.

There has been increased speculation that Jackson is fed up with his treatment by Democratic Party officials and is considering the formation of an independent party to embody the NRC agenda. Watkins said there was no chance of that happening. "Jackson is a Democrat, and he will definitely support the Democratic nominee, whoever it is."

And although the current crop of Democratic candidates are downplaying the deterioration in the quality of life for African-Americans, black leaders are gambling that they may, in fact, be on the right track. By shifting their focus to middle-class issues, the Democrats are trying to counter the charge that they are the instruments of sinister "special interests" seeking to maintain a welfare state.

With the country in the grip of a recession, white Americans may be more amenable to the kind of large domestic programs that could provide the resources for a genuine reinvestment in this country's human capital, which would spark a real change in social conditions and help ease escalating racial tensions. But then again, they may not be.

By David Moberg

WHEN MARIO CUOMO ANNOUNCED ON December 20 that he wouldn't enter the presidential primaries, many Democrats were disappointed. Chicago political consultant Phil Krone was among them, but Krone was also miffed. The night before, Krone had confidently predicted on a public radio talk show that Cuomo would declare his candidacy the next day. Krone had heard Cuomo had reserved a private plane to take him to New Hampshire and figured Cuomo was too cheap not to use it.

"He made me a bad prophet," Krone said, and within minutes, he claims, he decided to correct Cuomo's errant ways by launching a movement to draft the three-term New York governor to run. Krone cites a parable from Cuomo's biography. During a storm, a tree fell on the Cuomo household, and everyone concluded that the tree was dead. But Cuomo's father, insisting it could be saved, pushed the tree back up and tied it together.

The only choice? "We're gonna push him up," Krone now says of Cuomo, the temporarily fallen standard bearer. "He's going to live."

Mario to the rescue: After Cuomo's departure, the smart political money headed toward Clinton as most electable. Then attacks on Clinton's character began to tarnish his shining armor. Yet none of the other candidates, save Paul Tsongas in New Hampshire, seemed to be able to break out of the pack with the public or the party pros. With Bush plummeting in public support and bombing with his State of the Union address and health plan, the president suddenly seemed politically vulnerable. But who could strike the fatal blow?

"Who but Mario Cuomo?" was the response of the Draft Cuomo for President campaign. Krone, who has long had ties to Mayor Richard Daley's faction of Chicago Democrats, approached one of his frequent antagonists, political consultant Don Rose, who has fought the Daleys at every turn in his long career. Rose joined as national political director, he said, because "my personal feeling is that this is the only guy who has a shot at winning who is a progressive. He is also the first choice of an overwhelming majority of Democrats. If he were in the race in New Hampshire, there wouldn't be a contest."

Krone then talked to *Chicago Tribune* columnist Mike Royko, whose columns are run in as many as 650 newspapers around the country. Royko, long a Cuomo fan, told *In These Times* that the Democrats' process of nominating a president reminded him of the movie *Murder By Death*, where the Peter Sellers character's hunch is dismissed with this comment: "There's only one thing wrong with your theory. It's stupid."

"There's only one thing wrong with this [nominating] system," Royko said. "It's stupid. When Ron Brown [chairman of the Democratic Party] gave Cuomo a kind of deadline, and when Cuomo dropped out even though he struck many I knew as the best candidate, I thought somebody as a gesture should take on this dumb system."

Starting on December 23, Royko's columns boosting the draft Cuomo movement generated calls and contributions to the fledgling movement. By last week more than \$90,000 had come in. The average contribution was \$17. That provided Krone and Rose with enough money to open a New Hampshire of-



Some Dems won't take no for an answer

fice, send a mailing to the state's 85,000 registered Democrats and make a modest purchase of radio and TV time. In the split-screen TV ad, Cuomo is talking on one side, while an invisible hand slowly writes in "Mario Cuomo" on the darkened half of the screen.

Heading into the final week of the New Hampshire primary, Rose said the draft movement hoped to get at least 15 percent of the votes, which would guarantee Cuomo delegates. At the time, Cuomo was capturing anywhere from 2 percent to 19 percent in the volatile polls.

After New Hampshire, the draft movement hopes to move into the Maine caucuses. Then it will pick at least another state—perhaps the Washington caucus—to campaign in be-

fore the March 10 Super Tuesday vote. On that day they may try for a credible showing in Missouri and Massachusetts. (Boston Mayor Ray Flynn recently urged Cuomo to join the race.)

They will build toward Illinois, whose March 17 primary could be especially pivotal this year. There Krone and Rose have put together a large, diverse slate of uncommit-

If Cuomo won't come to the race, the race will have to come to him, say organizers.

ted delegates. In a poll of likely Democratic primary voters taken for the *Chicago Tribune* in early February, Cuomo had a higher favorable rating than any announced candidate (48 percent to 39 percent for Clinton, who has worked the state hard, wooing the Daley regulars). Fifty-six percent wanted Cuomo in the race.

While Cuomo has strong backing among Illinois liberals and union officials, he also appeals to the so-called Reagan Democrats: white, ethnic, blue-collar voters who have deserted their party's presidential candidates.

Bundled up in his Chicago Bears hat and jacket as he left a southwest side Chicago

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THE FIRST STONE

By Joel Bleifuss

Brave new world

In 1946, Aldous Huxley revised the forward of his 1931 novel *Brave New World* to fit the historical circumstances to the then-new world order.

He wrote in part: "There is, of course, no reason why the new totalitarianisms should resemble the old. Government by clubs and firing squads, by artificial famine, mass imprisonment and mass deportation, is not merely inhumane (nobody cares much about that nowadays); it is demonstrably inefficient and, in an age of advanced technology, inefficiency is the sin against the Holy Ghost. A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude. To make them love it is the task assigned, in present-day totalitarian states, to ministries of propaganda, newspaper editors and school teachers."

Such propagandists accomplish "their greatest triumphs," according to Huxley, "not by doing something, but by refraining from doing." He wrote, "Great is truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth. By simply not mentioning certain subjects, totalitarian propagandists have influenced opinion much more effectively than they could have done by the most eloquent denunciations, the most compelling of logical rebuttals."

Huxley is dead and the totalitarian powers of yesterday have been replaced by a kinder and gentler authoritarianism. If Huxley were still alive, he might be composing yet another forward to *Brave New World*. And if he were to write such an introduction from an American vantage, I would advise him to consider the following.

News of the censored: Today in the U.S., the public's perception of its elected leadership is shaped by a corporate media. By in large, this is a media that has decided that—as *Washington Post* owner Katharine Graham once told a gathering of top-level CIA officials—"there are some things the general public does not need to know and shouldn't. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows."

Each January, Project Censored, an organization based at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, Calif., releases a list of the previous years' "top 25 censored news stories"—or as Huxley might have said, stories the mainstream media has assiduously "refrained from doing."

According to Project Censored's Mark Lowenthal, the goal of his organization is to expose "the deafening silence from the mainstream press on a great number of issues that have serious implications for every citizen of this country, but aren't covered because they don't serve the purposes of those who control the press. We are exploring not what is marked up or cut out but what is never written about in the first place."

Of the 25 censored stories of 1991 collected by Project Censored, the top two honors involved the Gulf War. As Project Censored reported, they were:

- **"Uncensored Iraq Coverage Spiked by Networks.** *The San Francisco Bay Guardian* reported that CBS and NBC rejected professional videotape footage taken at the height of the air war in Iraq by two Emmy-award-winning documentary producers. The footage substantially contradicted U.S. administration claims that civilian damage from the American-led bombing campaign was light."

- **"Operation Censored War.** *The Progressive Review*, among others, has reported that the Gulf War set new, questionable standards for wartime secrecy. Many important stories, which the public had a right to know, are still not being reported by the major media. It took a freelance journalist, posing as a mortician, to get a more accurate estimate of battlefield casualties from the Dover Air Force Base mortuary, the only one handling Desert Storm casualties."

Reading through the 23 other top censored stories of 1991 leads one to reasonably conclude that, as Lowenthal puts it, "[t]he next Watergate will never be reported in the mainstream press. What we have now is more public stenography than investigative journalism."

The national press corps is all too willing to allow its "official sources" to interpret the news. If that doesn't change, says Lowenthal, "The strength of our democracy is really at stake, as dramatic as that sounds."

Nothing to chance: The blame for this media malaise does not rest with the press alone. For the past 11 years, what Huxley called the "all-powerful executive of bosses and their army of managers"

IN PERSON



Jan Wilder-Thomas: Sylvan spirit

By Joel Bleifuss

Jan Wilder-Thomas recalls the "indiscriminate killing of great numbers" that took place during the Fairview massacre of Aug. 26, 1990. She also recalls her arrest that day. She had been trying to take a photograph of her friend Dee Dokken who, having planted herself in front of an oncoming lumber company pick-up truck, looked headed for martyrdom. But seconds later a sheriff's deputy stepped in to block Wilder-Thomas' camera and, "in a hysterical frame of mind," she recalls, "I flailed out and my hand tapped his elbow."

Wilder-Thomas remembers the marshals dragging her off as she cried for the oaks, maples and hickories she would never embrace again. The Fairview trees were sliced down as she languished in Jackson County Jail, "sobbing away 10 pounds," she says. Although she was arrested on a Monday morning, it took 29 hours for her to be brought before a judge on a felony charge of aggravated battery. During that period, however, the county did find time to spray her unventilated cell with a pesticide. At first she suspected that it was done in retribution for her helping in 1985 through 1987 to successfully shut down the U.S. Forest Service's pesticide spraying program in the Shawnee. Later she was told by Sheriff Bill Kilquist that the spraying was a monthly "requirement." She has been the victim, she says, of "malicious prosecution for the outspoken stand I've taken over the years."

Jan Wilder-Thomas, a 40-year-old mother of three who weighs in at 95 pounds, stands tall when she talks about these trees she has hugged. She's not a bit self-conscious. Photos of their healthy gray trunks run throughout her photo albums, as do the tombstone stumps. "We had hugged every one of these hardwoods. That's a big responsibility—to carry the spirits of these trees around in you," she says, tears in her eyes. "I had a very personal bond with every hardwood out there. As they were ripping up these trees, they were breaking my heart." But with their death, her resolve was strengthened.

For the past seven years, Wilder-Thomas has devoted herself to protecting one of the few remaining hardwood canopies in North America, southern

Illinois' Shawnee National Forest. The battle to save the Shawnee has pitted Wilder and her fellow conservationists against a symbiotic trio: the U.S. Forest Service, the timber industry and their congressional agents. In the process, the Shawnee has turned into the key battleground over the future of the national forest system.

Wilder-Thomas describes the Shawnee as "263,000 acres of upland deciduous hardwoods, in credible bluffs and clear creeks that is a crossroad for hundreds of plant and animal species—northern and southern species, and eastern and western." She explains that the big trees—the giant oaks, maples, beech, hickory, tulip poplars and sycamores that once grew in southern Illinois and across the eastern woodlands—were felled in the 1800s and early 1900s. Only 300 acres of Illinois' old growth survives.

Primal forest: In southern Illinois, where once stood an ancient deciduous forest, now stands a regenerated woodland of 80- to 120-year-old hardwoods that, even in this youthful formation, is one of the finest forested growths east of the Rockies. Left undisturbed for 600 or so years, some of the Shawnee's young oaks could become mighty.

In the '30s, portions of this eastern woodland habitat became part of the National Forest System. Since then, public ownership has offered the Shawnee National Forest some measure of protection. But that protection began to erode under Reagan and then Bush—two presidents who have rarely hesitated to sacrifice the public good for private gain.

In 1988, it became apparent to Wilder-Thomas that the Department of Agriculture's National Forest Service was gearing up to increase the private harvest of publicly owned hardwood trees in the Shawnee. "The Forest Service harvests our trees like crops of corn," says Wilder-Thomas.

Each year more than half of the eastern hardwood trees harvested in the U.S. are used for wooden shipping pallets, which are usually used once and then discarded. The remainder of the harvest consists of 10- to 12-inch oaks and hickories that end up in paper mills and larger vanity timber that are exported to Japan, the Netherlands and Germany, where they are made into wood veneer.

In southern Illinois, the amount of lumber sold from the Shawnee shot up from 2 million board feet in 1978 to 12 million board feet in 1987. And as the trees came down, the Association of Concerned Environmentalists (ACE), the local environmental organization of which Wilder-Thomas was a founding member, argued that clearcutting the Shawnee would do irreparable harm to the last large tract of native hardwood forest in Illinois. In response to lobbying by Wilder-Thomas and her cohorts, the county commissioners of Pope, Alexander, Pulaski and Jackson counties voted to stop clearcutting in the Shawnee national forest. They were joined in the cause by a coalition of national and Illinois environmental organizations.

After negotiating with the environmental groups, the Forest Service lowered its harvesting goal to 10 million board feet per year. As part of that settlement, the Forest Service promised to stop clearcutting the forests, opting instead for a harvesting process called "group selection." The only voices raised against the settlement were those of ACE members.

The other groups, says Wilder-Thomas, "didn't hit the point that group selection was bad." Endorsed by the nation's leading environmental organizations, the Forest Service had abandoned its clearcutting policy for a method of tree harvesting that was worse.

Take the example of the timber harvest in the Shawnee's Fairview area. It was there that Wilder-Thomas was arrested in August 1991 for "battering" county deputy as she tried to take a photo. Instead of clearcutting 150 acres as originally planned, the Forest Service, using its group selection process, created a 611-acre sale area throughout which a patchwork of 166 total acres were harvested—25 of those acres were clearcut and on another 141 acres, all the large trees were removed and hauled out, damaging the surrounding growth.

the big woods: Wilder-Thomas pulls out a map of southern Illinois on which she has shaded a red that portion of the Shawnee National Forest that has not been cut—the portion with an intact canopy. She points out the 21 acres on the edge of the Shawnee on which she and her husband Randall live. In recent years the couple have watched as the trees on neighboring private lands were clearcut. They lead the back-to-the-land lifestyle of unrepentant bush hippies. They grow their own food and recycle everything. For their three children—Meadow, 14, Mission Wilder, 12, and Will Mesa, 7—schooling is in the home and on the frontlines. And as Wilder-Thomas says, "Grassroots organizing is a big part of our curriculum."

The children accompany their parents on lobbying trips to Washington and on the college lecture and slide show circuit. And they take part in the demonstrations. Dressed at a demonstration last year as the Fairview Ninja Turtle, Will performed a poem that began, "Hands off our greenery, Take home your machinery." And the kids have watched mom and dad get hauled off to jail.

"It is good for the children," says Randall. "I think it is making good people out of them. They are learning the whole democratic process. We're changing our timber policy by just holding this position. We are not going to stop the Forest Service by overcoming the law but by changing it."

And, as "Tommy" Wynette might have said, Randall stands by his woman. "She keeps at it and is devoted to do it, so I support her all I can," says Randall. "The forest work we're doing has become the family life. Jan got us involved in it. I resisted at first. I'm not so easily changed. And she changed our lives from a self-sufficient farm family to putting a lot of energy into trying to get the forest around us protected."

The family is different from some of their neighbors, but they are not outside agitators. Wilder-

Thomas is fourth-generation Pope County. Her folks live in the nearby town of Brookport. It was there that she went to high school. And it was from there that she went across the Mississippi to the hills of southern Missouri and to a Baptist college where, as Wilder-Thomas puts it, "I just realized there was a lot more to life than going to church."

Common concerns: The woman who returned to Pope County eight years later with an out-of-state husband was different from the girl who left it. But a shared concern for the local environment has bridged the differences in lifestyle between Wilder-Thomas and members of the more traditional community of which she is a part.

Choosing her words carefully, Wilder-Thomas says, "My parents have become educated—though they thought I had gone a little too far when I was seen on TV getting dragged off to jail."

Others don't quite understand her concept of protest as performance art. Recounting her occasional forays into the material world, Wilder-Thomas says, "I see people in the grocery store when I stop in to get my recycled toilet paper, and they come up and say, 'Thanks for what you're doing.' Though sometimes they are surprised at our rowdiness. We use lots of humor in our actions and sometimes that gets misinterpreted. They don't know quite how to take it when they see me on TV dressed in an Indiana bat costume dancing around and yelling, 'You're destroying my home.'"

"A crazy ding bat," is how some critics have described her. "Worse than hippies," editorialized one newsroom cracker. On a roll he continued, "They give hippies a bad name."

Others have taken Wilder-Thomas more seriously, like Rep. Sidney Yates, the north-side Chicago Democrat who chairs the House Appropriations' subcommittee for interior. "He championed the hardwoods," says Wilder-Thomas.

Last spring she paid him a visit in Washington, armed with heartfelt sincerity and her photo albums of fallen forest. She convinced him. He won her heart. She recalls, "He asked, 'Have you all chained yourselves to the trees?' And when he said good-bye, he raised his fist like an Earth First! fist and he said, 'We'll see what we can do to get this stopped.'"

With relish, she recounts how Yates interrogated Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. "This 85-year-old Jewish man grilled the chief for an hour. He asked, 'Why are you destroying the beauty of the Shawnee? Just let the 100-year-old trees get to be 200-years-old.'"

Through Yates' efforts, a bill passed the House of Representatives last June that redefined the Forest Service's "group selection" to mean "clearcutting." That new definition would have stopped Forest Service plans to use group selection as a substitute for clearcutting in all of the eastern National Forests, thus saving Fairview from the loggers.

For a time it looked like Wilder-Thomas and her fellow environmentalists had the Forest Service on the run. But when the bill went to the Senate, it was a different story. Sens. Robert Byrd (D-WV), John Danforth (R-MO) and Robert Dole (R-KS) rushed to the aid of the timber industry. Sources have told Wilder-Thomas, that Danforth and Dole threatened to filibuster if the offending language wasn't removed. In the end they prevailed.

Wilder-Thomas is now advocating fundamental change in Forest Service budgeting. She believes the best solution is to readjust the Forest Service's priorities by immediately eliminating taxpayer funding for timber sale programs and logging road construction. She hopes Yates' subcommittee will do just that, beginning with the subcommittee hearings on the Forest Service budget that are scheduled for February 26.

"The Forest Service is out of control," she says. "It always has been." □

have gone to great lengths to, in Huxley's words, "silence truth."

One of the most definitive examinations of how the Reagan-Bush White House propaganda apparatus has attempted to control public perceptions of administration policy is a 1988 report in *Foreign Affairs*. The report, "Iran-contra's untold story," was written by journalist Robert Parry, then of *Newsweek*, and policy analyst Peter Kornbluh, of the National Security Archive.

Parry and Kornbluh examine a domestic propaganda campaign, run from the National Security Council, aimed at fooling the public, the press and Congress about U.S. covert operations in Central America. They wrote in part: "To win this war at home, the White House created a sophisticated apparatus that mixed propaganda with intimidation, consciously misleading the American people and at times trampling on the right to dissent. In short, the administration set out to reshape American perceptions of Central America; and the Orwellian methods employed could be one of the most troubling legacies of Reagan's presidency."

Two weeks ago in this column, I recounted a 1977 report by Carl Bernstein that exposed the successful efforts of former CIA Directors William Colby and George Bush to ensure that the CIA's widespread infiltration of the mainstream press would not appear in a congressional report that examined CIA misdeeds.

Ten years later, the intelligence community was equally successful at preventing information about the Reagan-Bush administration's covert propaganda operation from being included in the final report of the congressional Iran-contra committees. As Parry and Kornbluh explained: "Congressional [Iran-contra] investigators did draft a chapter about the domestic side of the scandal for the Iran-contra report, but it was blocked by House and Senate Republicans. Kept from the public domain, therefore, was the draft chapter's explosive conclusion: that, according to one congressional investigator, senior CIA covert operatives were assigned to the White House to establish and manage a covert domestic operation designed to manipulate the Congress and the American public."

But a troubling question remains: What if there had been no manipulation? Would it have made a difference?

Get a life, not a lifestyle: There is no doubt that the American public prefers blissful ignorance to an exhumation of the body politic's corporeal decay. People would rather pursue life's pleasures than the gruesome particulars of social problems over which they seemingly have no control.

Americans rationally know that human happiness doesn't come from material consumption, but this awareness is overshadowed by a consumer culture that derives its power through promises of material satisfaction—promises that are actualized through the medium advertising.

The Center for the Study of Commercialism, founded in Washington in August 1990, has dedicated itself to "draw the public's attention to the insidiousness of advertising."

I asked center spokeswoman Jill Savitt if she thought *Brave New World* had a message relevant to today's readers. She did.

"Huxley was incredibly prescient," she said. "The metaphors really play out very well. Too well. It's scary."

According to Savitt, *Brave New World's* "feelies" (hyper-sensuround movies in which viewers plug themselves into the action) can be taken as a metaphor for today's television. While "soma" (the contentment drug that blunts the emotions and makes one feel good), has its parallel in advertising.

"Advertising sells you an image of a lifestyle that makes you feel really good," said Savitt. "A lifestyle that makes you happy and carefree, if you use a certain product, if you drink the right beer. And you will be even happier if you are more materialistic and buy the best car and the most VCRs. As a culture, what advertising does to us is make us first and foremost consumers—a much easier task than being citizens. Citizens need to struggle with some of the problems that face our community, but what the hyper-commercialism promoted by advertising does is blind us to those needs and blunt our sensitivity to them."

More observably insidious is the influence that corporate advertisers have over the corporate media outlets that depend on their advertising. But while the public, like Huxley's "slaves who love their servitude," can be seen as the complicit victims of advertisers, the media has no such excuse.

Next month, the Center for the Study of Commercialism will release a study that documents the pressure reporters are under from media management not to report anything that reflects unfavorably on major advertisers.

"While ads make people feel very good about buying products, these same ads silence reporters from talking about the problems that we as citizens need to deal with," says Savitt. "The influence of advertisers within the media is great and often oppressive—oppressive to the point of being silencing."

Wasting away

At a time when most American companies are downsizing or retooling for the tough times ahead—Waste Management Inc. (WMI) continues to grow. The company's annual revenues grew from \$76 million in 1971 to more than \$6 billion in 1990. And its avaricious appetite for other corporate outfits—it currently has a stake in nearly 1,000 subsidiaries—shows no signs of fading. WMI now owns controlling interests in the largest hazardous waste processing company, the largest nuclear waste disposal company and the largest garbage incineration firm in America. It also owns 49 percent of the nation's biggest asbestos removal firm.

While WMI's annual report for 1989 touted the firm's record profits, the Chicago-based waste-hauler reassured shareholders that "prevention of pollution and enhancement of the environment are the fundamental premises of the company's business."

For an alternative take on the fundamentals of WMI's business, the skeptical investor can now turn to Greenpeace's *Waste Management Inc. An Encyclopedia of Environmental Crimes & Other Misdeeds*, an exhaustive report (complete with 13 appendices and 40 pages of endnotes) on the nation's largest garbage disposal company. The 285-page report, released earlier this month, is the long-awaited sequel to the environmental group's 1987 study—which elicited an angry, but unsigned, 27-page rebuttal from WMI.

The new report, authored by Greenpeace toxics campaigner Charlie Cray, seems likely to provoke another angry response. On the report's first page, Cray contends that WMI has achieved its pre-eminent position through "the use and promotion of dangerous technologies and the abuse of economic and political power." Since 1980, Cray writes, WMI, its subsidiaries and its employees have paid more than \$28 million in fines or settlements for price-fixing, bid-rigging and other antitrust violations.

Apparently, WMI has also ensured success by greasing a few palms. In just the first seven months of 1991, the company's political action committee distributed campaign funds to 142 members of Congress, including a \$2,000 contribution to Iowa Sen. and Democratic presidential candidate Tom Harkin.

Political influence has played an important role in WMI's growth. In 1978, Chemical Waste Management (CWM), a highly profitable WMI subsidiary, purchased a 300-acre Alabama landfill from a group of investors led by the son-in-law of former Gov. George Wallace. While the state's primary hazardous waste official—a one-time WMI shareholder—provided political cover, CWM rapidly expanded the site to 2,700 acres, creating the U.S.' largest hazardous waste landfill. Although less than 15 years old, hazardous waste has already been detected leaking from the Emelle site—which lies directly over the Eutaw aquifer, a key water supply for many Alabamians.

According to the Greenpeace report, such WMI operations depend upon "the myth of safe [waste] disposal." Quoting from a 1981 Environmental Protection Agency study, the report notes that "at the present time, it is not technologically and institutionally possible to contain wastes ... for the long periods" necessary to safeguard human health.

"If humans are to survive," the report concludes, "we must diminish our releases of chemicals into the environment. This means we must rely less and less upon waste disposal technologies and eliminate the creation and use of these harmful substances to begin with."

To obtain a copy of the report, send \$20 to Greenpeace, 1436 U Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Nader's raiders

It's official—or officially unofficial. Though consumer advocate Ralph Nader is running as a write-in candidate in New Hampshire's Feb. 18 Democratic presidential primary, his name will appear on the Massachusetts ballot when Democrats there go to the polls on March 10. While Nader has insisted he's "a non-politician" simply trying to generate a "protest vote," he's beginning to look more like the real thing. A draft Nader movement is gaining momentum in Washington state, where supporters are urging Democrats to support Nader during the state's March 3 caucus. One pro-Nader handbill, addressing the issue of "electability," notes that "a national poll found that Ralph Nader topped Mario Cuomo's favorable rating 64 percent to 39 percent and did as well as Cuomo against Bush." If Nader's unofficial candidacy prevails in Washington, the handbill says, "he may be forced to make it official."

Eastern Europe's neoliberal metamorphosis

PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA—Like the subject of Kafka's famous story, "The Metamorphosis," the economies of Central and East Europe are losing their human shape and becoming brittle, insect-like entities under the guidance of the neoliberals now in charge. These economists have achieved what 40 years of Communist preaching failed to do—persuade people that full employment, social protection and central planning may have some virtues after all. And, as in Kafka's tale, the victim is assured that all is well and the unspeakable changes taking place are really quite in the normal order of things.

In Czechoslovakia—where Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus is solidifying his power—that transformation can be seen mainly in rising unemployment—15 percent already in Slovakia, rising prices that are driving workers to issue strike threats and sinking production. Klaus' counterpart in Poland, Leszek Balcerowicz, presided over an even more disastrous achievement. Balcerowicz, who recently left his position as finance minister when a new government took parliamentary power, presided over two years of financial catastrophe. During his tenure, consumption and industrial output fell dramatically, while inflation skyrocketed. According to the Polish economist Tadeusz Kowalik, Poland now has "mass unemployment which is expected to increase. Despite this, labor discipline has barely improved. Hidden unemployment relative to industrial output has actually increased. This means that unit costs have increased considerably and that the economy has become even more inefficient."

Kowalik, like Klaus, was an anti-communist, opposed to the regimes that were toppled in 1989. Like Klaus, he studied in the U.S., but his American experience has left him convinced that Klaus and Balcerowicz have been implementing disastrous policies. They have become what the Polish intellectual and Solidarity activist Adam Michnik calls "right-wing Bolsheviks," applying a rigid, inflexible program that assumes a scientifically predictable outcome based on social engineering.

The economic theory is that of the unregulated free market based exclusively on private-property relations extending to health, education, the media, social insurance as well as finance, trade and production. This ideology was glowingly oversold in the '80s as the Reagan-Thatcher revolution appeared to sweep all before it.

Austria, Germany, Switzerland,

northern Italy or the Scandinavian states bordering the Baltic have much better examples of working economies that mix the market, state and private property and constantly adapted interventions and regulations. Instead, the U.S. has become to the East European right what the Soviet Union was to much of the West European left in 1945—the source and model of power, ideas and political support.

Despite all the talk of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary "re-joining Europe," what Klaus, Balcerowicz or Jozsef Antall, the right-wing Hungarian prime minister, appear to be trying to do is leap-frog over their immediate Western neighbors and join up with California—though Colombia is what they will end up with if their economic ideology is fully implemented.

Klaus and his fellow ideologues are implementing their neoliberal theory by means of Leninist practice.

Klaus is not some Bohemian David Stockman, Reagan's disastrous budget director, wrecking an economy for a few years before drifting off to the pleasures and profit of private business. No, Klaus is a totalist with a complete political program to hand.

The first measure is the purge. Jan Kavan, the former London-based dissident who was the main propagandist for Charter 77 in the West, nearly lost his seat in the Czech parliament because of a carefully organized smear campaign claiming that he was a collaborator with the secret police. He was officially cleared of the charges last month. "Klaus and his men target me because I stand up for social democratic ideas such as the mixed economy, social protection for women and the poor, and for the defense of workers' rights," he says.

The Klausites have passed a new law calling for all state employees who were Communist Party members to be purged. Collective guilt is back as a principle in state politics. This does not affect the old ruling elite, who hopped carefully to the private sector taking billions of state cash with them. But it will allow room for loyal Klausites to be placed in key posts in ministries. All over East Europe and the Soviet Union, the strongest advocates of Klausism are ex-Communists who have gone into "bizness," usually acting as agents for Western capital.

The second measure is to marginalize the Charter 77 inheritance. Czech President Vaclav Havel has been forced to agree to morally dubious decisions, such as selling tanks to Syria and refusing to veto the law calling for the Communist purge—even though he was known to be against it. Bit by bit, he is turning into a symbol rather than a power-wielder. His job is probably safe, but a future of political irrelevance and

lots of foreign literary prizes is all that awaits him unless he gets his hands dirty with politics.

The third measure is to ban trade unions. Given that it was the general strike by Czech metal workers that was the decisive shove two years ago in the process of getting rid of the Communist regime, it is still difficult to do this formally. But Klaus and the weak labor minister, Petr Millar, have ignored agreements arrived at with unions in round-table discussions and talk openly about breaking union power. Strikes against mass unemployment will be the pretext for passing new laws to weaken labor.

The fourth measure is to divert attention from economic catastrophe by blaming others. The easiest (and far from illegitimate) targets are the old Communist regimes and the hidden Communist hand that Klaus claims obstructs the creation of a prosperous, market-economy Czechoslovakia. In parallel, a little touch of nationalism helps. Klaus, for example, simply shrugs his shoulders when the disastrous consequences of his policy for Slovakia are pointed out. "Business as usual," he says, as if Slovakia splitting off would not trouble him at all. The examples elsewhere in post-communist East Europe of passing the buck to the "Reds," the Jews or national minorities shows this tactic at work.

The fifth measure is controlling the media. In Hungary, the parliamentary leader of the ruling Democratic Forum Party has called for "decisive action" against the media, which in the finest traditions of Hungarian journalistic impertinence are vigorous in criticizing government policy.

Two years after the Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern and Central Europe are still waiting for a final settlement. Unlike Spain and Portugal, where the '70s transition to democracy after 40 years of dictatorship was eased by tolerance, compromise and an accommodationist forgiving of old scores, the mood in Eastern Europe is quite different.

In mid-1947, two years after Nazism was overthrown, there was still no political-economic settlement in Europe. But in six short months, between autumn 1947 and spring 1948, the iron curtain came ringing down and hopes for progress and democracy were dissolved in communist terror and capitalist accumulation.

It is difficult to see Eastern Europe today limping along trying to mix American or Thatcherite ideology with the respect for human dignity and rights that anti-communists like Havel or Michnik fought for. One force or one set of values must win out—and the odds are that Klaus will achieve his metamorphosis. It will not be a pretty sight.

—Denis MacShane

By John B. Judis

MANCHESTER, N.H.

WHEN THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL candidates appear at town meetings in working-class towns like Rochester and Claremont, two out of every three questions they answer are about health insurance. How will they make it available to people out of work or who work for small businesses that don't provide it? And how will they pay for it? Each of the Democratic candidates has an ambitious and plausible plan—except for one.

Iowa Sen. Thomas Harkin says that if he is elected, he will make national health insurance the highest priority of his new administration. But he speaks in the vaguest generalities about the kind of plan he favors and attacks his opponents' plans on grounds that could apply to any significant attempt to reform health care.

Harkin's refusal to take a stand would make sense if he were running as a conser-

Harkin may be the "true Democrat" on the rights of labor unions and on military spending, but he is not the true Democrat on health insurance—an important issue for working-class Democrats.

vative Democrat, but he says he is the "true Democrat" and he taunts his opponents as "weak Democrats." He claims that he is following in the tradition of Harry Truman, yet in 1949 Truman introduced a government-run and financed plan for national health insurance that was more far-reaching than any that the candidates currently advocate.

Rising taxes: When Harkin is asked about health insurance, he claims that he will get a national health plan adopted within a year of becoming president, but that he presently lacks the expertise to propose a detailed plan. This is a defensible position except for two things. Harkin has more experience in health issues than any other candidate, and he is the chairman of the health and labor subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

And Harkin does not limit himself to platitudes about his own position, but goes on to make specific and far-reaching criticisms of his opponents' plans. These criticisms echo those of the Washington insurance lobby and suggest that Harkin is not merely against the current proposals, but against any proposal for reform.

Harkin made his position abundantly clear in the January 31 Democratic debate that was moderated by PBS's Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer. Lehrer asked the candidates to explain how they planned to provide universal care. Paul Tsongas and Bill Clinton both advocated versions of the "pay or play" plan that Sens. George Mitchell (D-ME), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Donald Riegle (D-MI) and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) have introduced in Congress.



Harkin's weak health-care proposal is bad medicine for the system's ills

Tsongas and Clinton propose that employers either provide insurance for their employees or pay a tax that would fund a federal insurance program. They would control costs by using the power of the state—along with that of large employers—to bargain down insurance prices. Clinton would insist that insurance companies set rates for communities rather than for individuals or businesses.

Bob Kerrey wants to break the link between employment and insurance, requiring that state governments use the proceeds of a payroll tax to buy private insurance for all citizens. Kerrey would not eliminate insurance companies, but would have states set

health-care budgets to which the insurance companies would have to conform.

Either of these plans would require new taxes. These taxes would replace what employers and employees now pay for health insurance. In addition, taxes would have to cover the expense of including the estimated 37 million people who do not have any insurance. But if the federal and state governments use their regulatory and bargaining power to curb costs, then Americans' overall burden would not rise as rapidly as it would have under the present system. In five years, Americans could be saving billions of dollars and enjoying a degree of security that they

never had before. But it couldn't be done without higher initial taxes.

Absurdities: When Lehrer asked Harkin to respond to Kerrey's national health insurance proposal, Harkin attacked the proposal precisely because it would bring higher taxes. He insisted that genuine reform could be achieved without new spending or taxing—a patent absurdity. He then described an incremental, if not toothless, approach to health-care reform—stressing administrative reform, preventative medicine—that the insurance lobby in Washington has pressed as an alternative to any serious change. Har-

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Democracy

It shouldn't have to cost 12 years of war and over 75,000 lives.

But in El Salvador it has. To win just the right to democracy, the Salvadoran people had to triumph over years of U.S. support for military hardliners and the elite of Salvadoran society who use repression and terror to retain control.

On January 16, the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) signed a remarkable peace agreement—the outcome of U.N.-mediated negotiations in which fundamental reforms of Salvadoran society have been won. FMLN leader Shafik Handal points out that “the heart of the accords is that the 60-year rule of the Armed Forces is to be ended.” According to U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, “It is not an exaggeration to say that ...these agreements will lead to a negotiated revolution.”

Millions of Americans can be proud of our role. While the Bush and Reagan administrations sent billions of our tax dollars to support a government that routinely murdered peasants, labor leaders, priests and nuns, we took to the streets and organized protests from town halls to the halls of Congress. More than 150 Congresspeople supported our stand against all war-related aid.

Thousands of us travelled to El Salvador to see for ourselves what was really happening. We wrote songs and books. We made movies. We raised millions of dollars in *real* humanitarian aid. We boycotted Salvadoran coffee. And, we will not stop now.

Now, a new struggle to make democracy a reality is just beginning. While we celebrate the milestone peace accords, we should heed the warning of San Salvador Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas that “the road ahead will be difficult.”

Many in the Salvadoran military and ultra-right are bitterly opposed to the democratic reforms. Death squads still operate. And, the high-level officers behind the murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter are still at large.

It will take all of our vigilance to help ensure that the peace agreements are really implemented and basic human rights are respected. We must help make it possible for an open democracy—in which all Salvadorans can freely participate—to emerge.

We will have to demand that the Bush administration end all military aid. And we must press for a new U.S. policy toward El Salvador that channels U.S. assistance to support national reconciliation. U.S. aid must help overcome divisions in Salvadoran society—not strengthen one side.

Against all odds, the people of El Salvador won the right to democracy. We will continue to support them as they make it a reality.

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Rev. Richard Sinner
The Light House
Sisters of Charity Council — Cincinnati
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed
Virgin Mary — Dubuque, Iowa
Sisters of Divine Providence
Generalists
Sisters of Divine Providence,
Religious Community of Women
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur —
Connecticut Province
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur —
California Province
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By Dan Swanson

AS WE ENTER 1992, WHICH COUNTRY IS cursed with the world's worst dictatorship? Saddam Hussein's Iraq is certainly still in contention. Another possibility is the right-wing military junta in Sudan, which has suppressed information on the famine that is once again sweeping across the desert nation, delaying aid and causing death. Nor can we overlook Guatemala, where a civilian regime fronts for the military-landlord alliance that continues to hold onto power with massacres and death squads.

Burma, nearly forgotten until the courageous opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, is right up there with the worst of them. For years, Burma had the reputation of a sleepy Buddhist backwater, run by a non-aligned regime that called itself socialist. The government's refusal to turn Burma into a bawdy and garish tourist center like some of its southeast Asian neighbors even won it some plaudits in progressive circles.

In fact, Burma was another dreary, one-party military regime, whose socialist rhetoric was just a gloss. In March 1988, the true feelings of its people erupted as first students, then tens of thousands of others, spilled into the streets. In July, Gen. Ne Win, the longtime leader, shocked the country by announcing he was stepping down. Almost immediately, the pro-democracy protests grew even larger, demanding that his Burma Socialist Program Party surrender its monopoly on power.

A pro-democracy song explained that the Burmese were no longer content to be "rice-eating robots." One of their leaders was a political newcomer, a 43-year-old woman named Aung San Suu Kyi (pronounced aung san sue chi). Suu, as she calls herself, had returned home after years of living overseas to care for her ailing mother. Her father, Aung San, the founder of modern Burma, had been assassinated by a political rival in 1947, when Suu was only two years old.

General terror: The mainstream Western press frequently uses a simplistic cultural-historical explanation for violence in the Third World. During the '80s, we learned that there was something ingrained in the Central American psyche, some harsh remnant of the Spanish conquistador spirit, that explained the ongoing killings.

That kind of simplism would be a little harder to sustain in Burma, a country that is predominately Buddhist; around Mandalay, the nation's spiritual center, the spired temples are scattered across the plains. But there was nothing contemplative or pacifistic about how the Burmese generals sought to return their power when the people challenged them during that democracy summer of 1988.

Martin Smith, whose *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* is a masterful account of the isolated country's modern history, explains how the army simply opened fire on masses of its own citizens. He reports that the high command even deliberately released common criminals and sent them out into the streets, hoping that they would add to chaos and prompt a demand for order. Then, in September 1988, the military staged a coup, constituting itself as the State Law and Order Restoration Council, which, in English, forms an appropriately ugly acronym: SLORC. In all, more people died in Burma than in the much better publicized pro-democracy move-



Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, remains under house arrest.

Burma has a new name but the same old military junta

ment in China the following year.

But the regime had been forced to concede some kind of democratization. Scores of political parties had registered for elections scheduled for May 1990, and the SLORC strategists believed their party could triumph over a divided opposition. To improve their chances further, they put Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest in July 1989 and harassed and intimidated other opposition figures.

But the opposition confounded the regime by coalescing around Suu's National League for Democracy (NLD). When the votes were counted, the NLD had won in a landslide, garnering 82 percent of the seats in the new assembly.

The SLORC's unpopularity was truly exposed. It has arrested at least 50 elected opposition members of parliament, of whom three have died in prison. Other NLD members saw no choice but to flee to the border regions—zones under the control of rebel forces that have battled the central government for decades. In November 1990, a provisional government was formed in the eastern mountain town of Manerplaw. The prime minister is Sein Win, a pleasant mathematics professor who had been elected as an NLD deputy. Sein Win spends much of his time traveling the world appealing for support.

Inside Burma, all dissent was crushed. In a

just-released report, Article 19, the international anti-censorship organization, shows how even the slightest efforts to voice opposition are silenced:

- One man, U Nay Min, a lawyer, was sentenced to 14 years in prison at hard labor just for talking with British Broadcasting Corporation correspondent Christopher Gunness.

- Another man, U David Hla Myint, was arrested for flying the opposition flag at the same height as the national banner.

- Zargana, a 30-year-old comedian, is believed to be serving five years—for impersonating one of the leading SLORC generals in a performance.

Against fear: Aung San Suu Kyi's family have had no contact with her, not even a letter, since July 1990. The SLORC has offered to release her and expel her from the country, but she has said she will leave only if she is allowed to address the nation first by radio and television.

The generals fear her profoundly. It is true that she first got a hearing in Burma because she is Aung San's daughter. But before the generals silenced her she had won a huge following in her own right with hundreds of courageous speeches all over the country; once, in Danabyu, she walked, alone, straight at a band of soldiers who were about to open fire before their major countermanded the

order.

Suu's explanation for the violence of the Burmese junta is not Third World cultural but universal: fear. In a collection of her essays titled *Freedom from Fear*, she wrote, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it, and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those

ASIA

who are subject to it." To resist, she encourages Burmese to become like "glass splinters, the smallest with its sharp glinting power to defend itself against hands that try to crush."

The U.S. and some other Western nations cut their aid to Burma. But the SLORC regime is being sustained by others: China, which has shipped massive amounts of arms; Singapore; Japan; and certain Western oil companies, including Amoco and Royal Dutch Shell, which helped bail out the beleaguered regime by paying it for the right to prospect.

Most frightening from the ecological standpoint is the irreversible destruction of the tropical forests. To pay its arms bills, the SLORC is permitting unchecked logging; one estimate is that the teak forests will be entirely gone in 10 years.

The military was so desperate that it even changed the name of the country. One explanation is that Myanmar, the new name, is the term used by Burmans, the two-thirds of the population who live in the heartland. By using these people's preference, the SLORC is thus making an ethnic chauvinist appeal against the one-third who belong to various ethnic minorities, who tend to live in the hills, and who have long fought for greater autonomy and even independence from the central government. (Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters say she has the best chance to reconcile ethnic tensions in the country.)

The provisional prime minister, Sein Win, offered a different, and bizarre, explanation for the name change (unrecognized by the opposition) during a recent visit to the United Nations. He said he had heard that the SLORC's astrologers predicted that "Burma" would have a change in government. By changing the name to "Myanmar," he said with a laugh, the SLORC may be trying to avoid the fate written in the stars.

But there is nothing comically otherworldly about the SLORC's tactics. The military was 185,000-strong when the democracy summer broke out in 1988. That figure is already 300,000, with an ultimate goal of half a million—an absurd figure in a country with only 40 million people and no regional enemies.

Aung San Suu Kyi is still silent. Her English husband, Michael Aris, wrote in the introduction to her writings: "I am not sure if the Nobel Peace Prize has ever been given to someone in a situation of such extreme isolation and peril."

(The International Burma Campaign has just been formed. The director, Tin Tin Nu Raschid, is at 307 Yoakum Parkway, Suite 1726, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone: (703) 823-1937.)

Dan Swanson is based in New York City as the U.S. representative for Article 19, the international anti-censorship organization. Article 19 has just released a comprehensive report called *State of Fear: Censorship in Burma (Myanmar)*. Article 19 is at 485 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 557-1220.

IN THESE TIMES FEB. 19-25, 1992 9

Cuomo

Continued from page 3

supermarket, Clement Marszalek, 70, explained that, even though he voted for Bush, "Bush's ideas I don't like at all. He's not going all out for the middle class and lower people. He should give more attention to the homeless and needy." Yet, Marszalek mused, "There's no Democratic candidate I can see who's fit to do the job—unless they draft Cuomo. He's the only one who's fit to speak for the people."

The possible dream? Rose sees two possible scenarios. In the first, Cuomo wraps up his budget problems by late March, acknowledges the grass-roots demand and enters the race. In the second, Cuomo never formally enters, but the draft moves along, picking up about 200 delegates (out of nearly 5,000). At the convention, Rose speculates, "Cuomo gives a welcoming speech. The crowd goes

wild. Clinton can't win. No one has a majority. Cuomo is everyone's second choice."

Democratic National Committee Political Director Paul Tully sees the draft Cuomo movement as a "serious operation" that, like the competing draft Ralph Nader movement, benefits from the disorderly political climate. "It is late and a great burden," Tully observed, "but anybody who wants the nomination can theoretically decide today and put themselves in play. It's not possible to secure the nomination by write-in. You need a real live horse. You've got to convey to people that you're serious, and this is what you're going to do." A latecomer like Cuomo, he added, could still compete in the caucuses, which are wide open, and "piggyback" on delegates slated for candidates who may drop out of the race.

Tully is pleased that people once again are more likely to see the Democrats as the party of the "little guy" and that the primary

is focusing debate on gut issues of health care, tax relief for the middle class, education and the best use of the peace dividend. Cuomo has high name recognition (only Ted Kennedy and Jesse Jackson among Democrats rank higher) and strong support on both coasts (less in the South). "The wonderful thing about the governor," Tully said, "is his capacity to articulate very powerful concerns so that policy questions and values are clear. A formidable candidate—but you've got to get the horse to drink."

Many labor leaders would probably flock to Cuomo despite their leanings now to Harkin, Clinton or others, although public employees are very unhappy with Cuomo. "This election is key for unions," one staff person said. "But there's a fear that come November we won't be left with anyone."

The draft Cuomo movement has been careful to maintain its independence and not talk with Cuomo. For his part, the governor

has said he is flattered, but he will neither encourage nor discourage the effort.

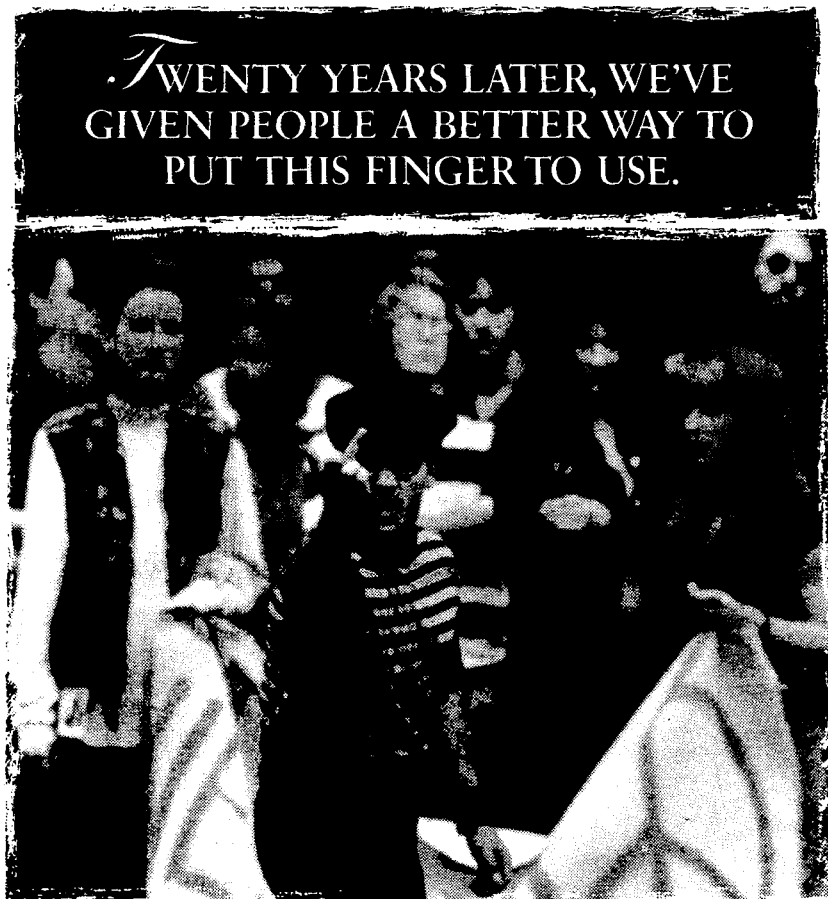
By not entering the race, Cuomo hasn't had to test his ideas against those of other candidates, expose himself to critical scrutiny or engage in the sometimes brutal interplay of the campaign, which could provoke the proverbially thin-skinned governor. Although Cuomo's gubernatorial record has deep flaws, from a liberal vantage point, Rose argues that no governor in the Reagan-Bush years could be very progressive. In addition, Republicans have controlled the New York Senate throughout his tenure.

Cuomo's reluctance to enter the race also "hurts, no question, it hurts," Rose said. "On the other hand, if all the things we're talking about gel, the fact that he's been genuinely drafted by the people of the country offsets a whole lot of the 'Hamlet-on-the-Hudson' commentaries."

There has never been a successful grass-roots, bottom-up draft of a presidential nominee, and for several decades, there has been no convention suspense over the nominee, except for the debate over seating delegations at the 1972 convention.

But who knows? "I threw a Ribfest on an impulse," Royko said. "I threw a mongrel dog show once on an impulse. I do a lot of stuff without thinking. I could never play chess. I can only think one move ahead."

Then again, politics may be less like chess and more like a mongrel dog show. ☐



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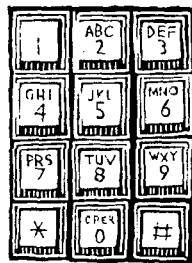
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Harkin

Continued from page 7

kin's position put him slightly to the right of the Bush administration.

The following was Harkin's statement:

Harkin: Well, first of all, I appreciate what my good friend, Bob Kerrey, is saying about raising taxes, but I wish you would be more forthright and tell the people exactly how much taxes are raising...

Kerry: I have been telling them how much taxes...

Harkin: ...\$246 billion of new taxes in the first year under the Kerrey proposal, a 5 percent increase in payroll taxes—that is what it does. We are spending \$817 billion this year on health care. We don't need to spend any more, and if Mr. Kerrey or anybody else comes to the American people and says, "Well, we are going to raise your taxes and take it in, and then we'll give you something back," hang onto your wallet because that's not going to happen. I am saying we don't have to spend any more and we don't have to tax any more. What we have to do is reshape the health-care system. First of all, squeeze out the waste. I chair the appropriations subcommittee that funds these health programs. I keep coming across all these examples—a \$700 foam mattress that Medicare is paying for that costs \$29. That goes on and on and on. Cut that out.

Secondly, cut the administrative costs. Twenty-four cents of every dollar in health care is for paperwork. One electronic form,

Harkin's criticisms of other candidates' plans echo those of the Washington insurance lobby—and suggest that he is not merely against the current proposals, but against any proposal for reform.

nationalized form, would save us up to \$20 billion. Reduce unnecessary medical procedures. One out of four medical procedures is unnecessary, another \$20 billion. Let's go to lower-cost providers like nurses, home care, national health service corps that I have been trying to raise funding for. A more equitable bearing of the costs. Businesses that are not paying their fair share ought to belly-up to the bar and pay their fair share. And last...

Lehrer: But maintain the current system?

Harkin: No, no. This current system has got to change. But the last, and the most important of all—and none of these people are talking about it, and Bob doesn't talk about it—prevention. We have got to build as our health-care system preventative health care. Maternal and child health care, one dollar saves three.

In his personal appearances in New Hampshire, Harkin has insisted that he advocates "fundamental change" in the health-care system. But Harkin is not advocating significant change. Instead he is reinforcing the insurance lobby's arguments against both the "pay or play" and national health-insurance programs—programs that, whatever their shortcomings, would bring about major improvements in American health care.

Insurance lobby: Why is Harkin taking these positions? According to prominent Har-

kin supporters in Washington who requested anonymity, the candidate does not want to risk his access to insurance lobby money in future Senate re-election campaigns. One Harkin backer, who discussed the matter privately with Harkin and his staff, put it bluntly. Harkin, he said, "doesn't want to piss off the insurance companies."

Indeed, Harkin has depended on insurance company money in his past campaigns. In running for Senate in 1990, Harkin received political action committee (PAC) contributions from at least 25 insurance company PACs, including Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Carepac, the Aetna, Prudential, Mutual of Omaha, Metropolitan, Massachusetts Mutual and Hartford PACs, and the American Insurance Association PAC.

Harkin also received sizable PAC contributions from other anti-reform forces, including pharmaceutical companies, the American Medical Association, the American

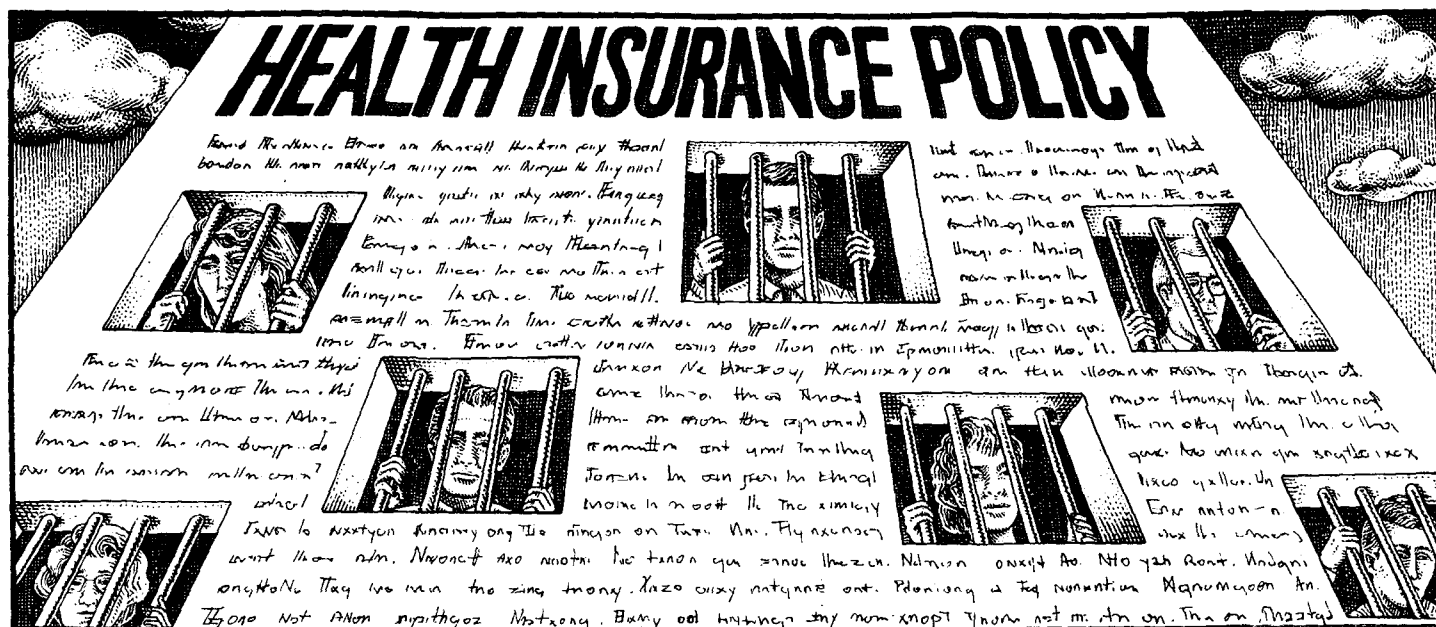
Healthcare Association, the American Pharmaceutical Association and the Hospital Corporation of America. His health and insurance PAC contributions totaled about \$100,000. In addition, Harkin received numerous contributions from individual insurance agents and executives. Next to labor contributions, those from the insurance and health industries made up the largest proportion of Harkin's campaign contributions.

In his presidential race, Harkin has already received contributions from insurance agents and executives from such companies as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Mutual of Omaha, Farmer's Casualty, Equitable and Northwestern Mutual Life. But Harkin seems far more worried about funding for future Senate races than funding for his presidential campaign.

True Democrat: Harkin is probably not the only presidential candidate whose positions are driven by funding considerations. One can ask, for instance, how much of Ker-

rey's reluctance to abandon insurance companies as intermediaries is the result of his significant reliance on donations from Nebraska's insurance companies? Or how much of Tsongas' preference for "pay or play" is the result of his serving as a lobbyist for the American Insurance Association? But Harkin's position is the more egregious because he has not merely hedged his own commitment to national health insurance, but is attempting to weaken public support for meaningful reform.

Harkin's refusal to back health insurance also bears out the superficiality of political labels. Harkin may be a "true Democrat" on the rights of labor unions and military spending, but he is not a true Democrat on health insurance—one of the most important issues for working-class Democrats. On that issue, he is closer to Robert Taft and George Bush than to Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson.



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From Ethiopia to Capitol Hill to the cancer ward, the candidate has followed a tortuous personal and political course.

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By John Canham-Clyne

ASK DEMOCRATIC VOTERS TO DRAW a profile of their ideal presidential candidate, and it's unlikely they will describe a technocratic Greek liberal from Massachusetts with a plodding public demeanor. But as *The Times* went to press, former Massachusetts Sen. Paul E. Tsongas had surged behind Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton in the New Hampshire pre-primary polls and seemed to don the mantle of front-runner.

Despite the superficial similarities, Tsongas' style and message are different from Michael Dukakis' four years ago. The gas campaign is relentlessly subtle, in contrast to Dukakis' insistence that the race "was about competence." When Dukakis staked his entire fortune on his word creating the "Massachusetts Miracle," Tsongas uses his corner of the miracle as a revitalization of his hometown, Lowell, only as an illustration of larger ideas. The gas does carry an air of righteousness, but he echoes his predecessor, but he is able to disarm it with a dry, self-deprecating humor so desperately lacking four years ago.

Tsongas grew up in Lowell, a 19th-century textile manufacturing center that fell on hard times and underwent a revival orchestrated in large part by the candidate. He refers constantly to his roots in Lowell but has traveled a tortuous personal and political road. He was a Peace Corps volunteer for three years in the '60s, a city councilman, county commissioner, a two-term congressman and a one-term U.S. senator.

He has always had a reputation as a maverick, but the last seven years he has played with a blunt, direct honesty that has played well with New Hampshire voters. Tsongas decided not to run for re-election for the Senate in 1984 and returned to Lowell to spend time with his family and because he had contracted cancer. He battled the disease with a variety of treatments that culminated in a bone-marrow transplant re-

Eleanor Mills/Mills News Art Syndicate

Tsongas

the road less traveled

ing him to spend six weeks in isolation in an antiseptic hospital room. The experience left him with an unusual dose of perspective as well as a willingness to speak his mind directly and let the chips fall where they may.

For example, in a season of welfare reforms designed to penalize "anti-social behavior" by poor people, it is refreshing to hear an avowedly pro-business presidential candidate concede that capitalism contains powerful incentives to anti-social behavior by the rich. In his campaign booklet, "A Call to Economic Arms," Tsongas describes his experience as a member of the board of directors of a corporation, pointing out how corporate executives and members of boards face systemic pressure to make decisions based on the short-term greed of their stockholders.

The fast buck and the long haul: The company in question had accumulated a substantial amount of cash, and the board had to choose between distributing the money to shareholders as dividends or buying a second company. The first path would have put some money in shareholders' pockets, but only the second, according to Tsongas, "would mean better market share, a broader technology base and real economies of scale." Tsongas and the board decided for the second option, but he realized that by placing the company in a stronger competitive position, they might have opened themselves to personal lawsuits by disgruntled stock owners. Shocked by the idea that he might be risking his family's personal wealth by deciding to make an investment that would keep the company productive and workers employed over the long run, Tsongas began to realize that American law encourages socially destructive behavior in the boardroom. "Why," he writes, "should short-term shareholder value be considered more responsible by our legal system than long-term competitive viability?"

This is not to say that Tsongas would turn factories over to workers. Tsongas prides himself on telling audiences what he thinks they need to hear, not what they want to hear. While upbraiding management for shortsightedness and unnecessarily con-

frontational labor relations, he chides labor for promoting restrictive work rules. Tsongas told a recent Rainbow Coalition forum that he would gladly support workers who strike—especially if those strikes were to force management to institute quality-control programs or develop export strategies.

Of course, while those workers were on strike for those noble goals, the company could replace them—and Tsongas would not prevent it. Tsongas told the AFL-CIO's biennial convention in November 1991 that he did not support bills currently before Congress (S 55 and HR 5) that would outlaw the practice of hiring permanent replacements for striking workers. According to Muriel Cooper, spokesperson for AFL-CIO's information department, Tsongas is the only "major" Democratic candidate who opposes the bill. Explaining Tsongas' position, campaign staffer Mike Litz told *In These Times* that the candidate doesn't want to see "either side gain too much leverage" in management-labor relations.

Tsongas talks about how the U.S. needs labor-management-government "teamwork" to create a competitive economy over the long run. The key to productivity, he says, lies in management being willing "to engage workers in true joint consultation and decision-making." But Tsongas would put government power firmly behind only one "team" member: Management would get progressive capital gains tax reductions for long-term investments, tax credits for research and development and a relaxation of antitrust laws.

For labor, Tsongas promises only to give "high and consistent visibility" to companies practicing inclusive management and to persuade management to drop "old attitudes."

Labor has been suspicious of this sort of rhetoric for years, because "inclusive management" has often been a euphemism for union-busting. But Tsongas comes by his approach honestly. As a senator, he had a strong pro-labor record, with a lifetime rating of 90 percent from AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education.

The lessons of home: Tsongas' views on the nature of capitalism, like his opinion on

virtually all economic issues, grows out of the experiences of his hometown. Lowell was one of the first American cities to industrialize, and then to de-industrialize. Between 1920 and 1970, the city lost nearly a quarter of its population as industry moved away and people followed. Tsongas anguished as he watched the decline. In his 1981 book, *The Road From Here: Liberalism and Realities in the 1980s*, Tsongas likened the decline of a city to watching a fire die. "The critical mass for continued dynamism is no longer present: Even while there is still both heat and light, the eventual outcome is obvious," he writes.

In the '70s, first as a member of the Lowell City Council and later as congressman and senator, Tsongas took political poker in hand and helped stir some flame from the embers. The first step was to complete the work of his Republican predecessors in the House by getting Lowell's old textile mill area designated as the first urban national park.

The second step was to bribe, cajole and intimidate local businesses to stay and invest in the community. Tsongas and Lowell City Manager Joseph Tully orchestrated the redevelopment of the city, using military dollars, corporate tax breaks and low-interest loan guarantees to fuel a boom in real estate, weapons production and high-tech industry. As a result of their efforts, Lowell was the first and most visible example of the "Massachusetts Miracle." Companies like Wang and Digital Electric soon made suburban Boston a thriving center of high technology manufacture.

It's clear Tsongas has thought long and hard about the effect of economic forces on communities. Lowell's journey from textile capital of the world to decaying backwater wasn't just an accident, he writes in *The Road from Here*, but "an example of the problems of the free enterprise system. When the economics were with you, there was prosperity. When the economics were against you, the system was brutal. ... Under the free enterprise system, useless items are discarded in favor of more productive ones. How do you discard a city? Very simply—by allowing it to decay."

By working closely with business in his at-

tempts to revive Lowell, Tsongas became convinced that government's role is to help smooth the bumps in the capitalist road, to harness the dynamics of a growing economy for the long-range well-being of the country and to give workers the skills necessary to produce in a high-wage society. He carries this facilitator view into the classroom, advocating local school-parent-business mentoring and partnership programs and calling for technical schools and community colleges to become centers for ongoing worker training.

Out of Africa: If his views on the domestic economy arise from Lowell, his foreign policy views stem from his experience in his other "hometown." Tsongas lived in Wolisso, Ethiopia, for two years in the early '60s, as part of the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia. In *The Road from Here*, Tsongas recalls leaving Wolisso and being unable to "decide whether I was going home or leaving home." Before Tsongas went to Ethiopia, he had never been more than 60 miles from Lowell. When he returned, he spoke Amharic and felt he had learned to see the world from an Ethiopian perspective.

As a senator, Tsongas supported modest defense increases but opposed attempts to achieve military superiority over the Soviets as costly and unnecessary. He opposed much of the Reagan administration's policy in the developing world, arguing that a heavy-handed emphasis on East-West competition led the U.S. into repeated betrayal of the values that the country ought to represent—liberty, democracy and respect for human rights.

Tsongas claims that his Peace Corps experience gives him a feel for relations with the Third World that no American president has ever had. Criticizing the way U.S. decision-makers "imposed an East-West overlay" on Vietnam, Tsongas goes on to describe the future. Regional conflicts, he writes in "A Call to Economic Arms," "will arise most probably over resource questions or attempts to 'remedy' colonially-imposed artificial borders. ... The resolution of these potential crises cannot be endless military engagement. There are just too many disputed borders, ethnic rivalries and unbalanced heads of state."

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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THE KISS OF DEATH

The media's dispassionate detachment from principle

Media treatment of Gov. Bill Clinton's sex life these past few weeks has caused many thoughtful people to comment on the role that newspapers and television now play in molding and reflecting public opinion. Some are angry that the media sensationalized a story about a private affair that occurred in the past and that had nothing to do with public-policy issues. Others, particularly editors, reporters and TV commentators, say that once the story was picked up by less responsible publications, they had no choice but to go along with the savaging of the man they themselves had anointed as the leader in the race for the Democratic Party presidential nomination.

For our part, we watched bemused by a media that could not stop itself from undoing its own creation. It was a sort of poetic injustice, propelled by the imperatives of competition for readers and viewers by value-free corporate conglomerates that compete not at all in the realm of ideas or principles.

Consider this: Bill Clinton was declared the only electable Democratic candidate at a time when there wasn't a shred of evidence to support this supposition. At the same time Sen. Tom Harkin, Clinton's most substantial rival and a man with a long record of opposition to the priorities of the Reagan and Bush administrations, was declared a man of the past, a representative of narrow (working-class) interests and, therefore, a natural loser.

Neither of these conclusions had been drawn from observation of current events in the public arena. But after endless repetition by reporters, pundits and editorialists, the commercial media created what they professed only to describe: a front-runner and an apparently hopeless follower. And, of course, they did so in the guise of just reporting the facts.

The uniformity of these conclusions throughout the media—even on National Public Radio—demolishes the lie that ours is a free press. That does not mean, however, that journalists are not free to write as they please, as long as they stay within acceptable bounds. Their's has become a ritualized freedom, one that is encased in a double bind. On the one hand, ideas and principles defer to the low-

est common denominator of popular interest, while on the other, the implicit or explicit limits set by publishers are routinely, albeit often unconsciously, followed by journalists and editors who understand the path of career advancement.

The media, in other words, has become an objective or impartial M.C., as the *New Yorker's* "The Talk of the Town" recently observed. Where the press once educated the public through its "many-sided engagement with facts and principles," it now simply referees within the framework of official wisdom. "It is as if the press were the Post Office," the *New Yorker* observes, "a semi-official arm of government delivering a product, and with no more responsibility for what that product contains than the postman has for what's in the envelope."

But this is only half true. The valid half of this condition was illustrated in the media's handling of Clinton's sex life. But only weeks before when Oliver Stone had the temerity to suggest in *JFK* that the official version of John F. Kennedy's assassination was a lie, the other side of this equation came into play. Stone's challenge to the government's version of reality was more than the unofficial guardians of official opinion could stand. In that case, they instantly forgot their role as referee and rose to defend the one-party line. Unlike the Clinton story, which occurred within the bounds of official discourse, Stone's transgression suggested the impermissible. So he was uniformly swatted down.

Writing about American democracy in 1830, Alexis de Tocqueville commented that the great diversity of the American press, the cacophony of conflicting voices and interests, was a sign of democratic vitality and a guarantee of an educated polity and a healthy civil society. But, he warned, should the press ever come to be controlled by one, or a handful of interests, democracy would be in great peril. That, of course, is what has happened in this century especially since the advent of television as the major medium through which people are informed—or, more accurately, misinformed and manipulated.

Formal democracy still exists. Indeed, it is the best ideological protection that our rulers have and therefore is not under serious attack. Dissent and opposition are not only possible, but in most cases they are also protected. That creates space for those of us who share de Tocqueville's understanding of democracy as passionate involvement with ideas and principles. But we occupy a narrow space in the spectrum of media voices, one that can be kept open only through constant struggle and the active support of those who share our understanding of democracy.

Scaring guardians

MANY THANKS TO *IN THESE TIMES* FOR A FAIR AND level-headed appraisal of Oliver Stone's stunning cinematic epic *JFK* (editorial, Jan. 22). After the deluge of hysterical and vitriolic commentary from an array of mainstream journalists, as well as a few from the left, your editorial on the *JFK* controversy was most welcome. *ITT* is correct in stating that the mystery that continues to enshroud the death of our 35th president is due in large part to the insipidity permeating the major media. Despite the many loose ends and conundrums left unresolved by the "investigation" conducted by the Warren Commission, most journalists were uncritical of the Commission's report. This overwhelming conformity dominates discussion of most issues taken up by the mainstream media.

Though the atrocious handling of Kennedy's murder by our government has indeed spawned a plethora of conspiracy theories, many of the more serious Warren Commission critics are deserving of our collective thanks. Despite the apathy or ridicule they have so often encountered over the last 28 years, these dedicated private researchers, writers and investigators have kept at this disturbing case and have amply demonstrated the Warren report's shortcomings.

Sadly, it has taken a major movie release to awaken a slumbering press and polity. Regardless of what one ultimately thinks about the premise of Stone's film, it challenges the complacency of viewers. It even gets people thinking. This is something, of course, that many in the establishment do not want: a thinking public capable of critical analysis.

Oliver Stone has managed to scare the pants off a wide array of guardians of establishment "truth." As a result of his determined effort to portray a conspiratorial perspective of John F. Kennedy's murder, files currently sequestered from the American public may finally be unlocked. That would be no small accomplishment. Stone's courage and conviction put the scribblers at the *New York Times* et. al. to shame.

Joe Martin
Seattle

Think about it!

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREED WITH YOUR EDITORIAL, "The media's conspiracy against Oliver Stone" (*ITT*, Jan. 22). The corporate media do, as you noted, "seem to have formed a conspiracy of [their] own to defend the Warren Commission report and to denounce Stone for daring to raise questions about the official story."

As Stone himself argued in his December 20 op-ed in the *New York Times*, "Members of the media establishment get upset when art gets political, especially when they disagree with the politics and fear the viewpoint. When this priesthood is threatened as the sole or privileged interpreters of our history, they bludgeon newcomers, wielding heavy clubs such as 'objectivity' and charging high crimes such as 'rewriting history.'" Stone concludes this line of reasoning by saying that "the real issue is trusting the people with their real history."

Established power requires many veils, lest its lack of legitimacy be revealed. This is true of every society, but ours more so than others only because American power is so much more vast. The commissars of culture—the target of the barbs in your editorial—the intellectuals, the pundits, the media and the like, all of whom serve state and corporate power by imposing doctrinally correct views upon the people—have always had the task of weaving whatever veils established power requires. So far there have been very few surprises, if any, in the prevailing tone of the negative reactions to *JFK*.

Another point: Of all the words spent by mainstream commentators on Stone's film, the overwhelming majority of them have defended the Warren Commission or remained silent regarding it.

Think about it. Everybody who is anybody and who, as a consequence, has been awarded the op-ed space they need to comment on the issues surrounding *JFK* has attacked Stone and his film; nobody but Stone has been permitted to defend *JFK*; and nobody finds it worth his or her trouble to launch an attack on the Warren Commission (i.e., official history), much less to raise some nasty questions concerning what sort of cultural institutions it must require to produce uniformity of opinion on such a spectacular scale as this. That's quite a system of indoctrination they've got going there.

David Peterson
Evergreen Park, Ill.

Decadence

YOU STATE IN YOUR EDITORIAL (JAN. 22) THAT "decades ago, when we still had a free competitive press, the Kennedy assassination would have been thoroughly investigated." When was that? How many decades ago?

In that same issue, the lead article informs us that the CIA sponsored a coup in Guatemala in 1954 with propaganda supplied by the *New York Times*. That is four decades ago. In the same article, William Randolph Hearst is quoted regarding the Spanish American War, "I'll furnish the war, you furnish the pictures." That was 1898, eight decades ago.

In George Seldes' newspaper *In Fact* (Vol. VI, No. 1 Oct. 12, 1942), he writes that William Randolph Hearst is considered America's No. 1 fascist because "...for a decade he has paid Hitler, Goering and Goebbels a dollar a word to write for his newspaper chain." That decade would have been 1932, six decades ago.

There is no point in continually repeating that we'll never know who killed Kennedy and those who think they do know are para-

noid. Citizens trying to learn who is responsible for the murder of their elected president are called conspiracy nuts by the compromised media, who, I maintain, were never independent or competitive. Who killed Kennedy? Open the files.

Andy Name
Palo Alto, Calif.

Editor's note: OK, sorry, we meant many decades ago—as in the early 1900s, when, despite the power of publishers like Hearst, we did have a competitive press.

Halliday on ice

FRED HALLIDAY WRITES (*ITT*, JAN. 15) THAT "ON the evidence available," there was no way to get Iraq out of Kuwait short of war. "Sanctions would not have worked, since they assumed that Hussein would yield in the face of the hardship on his people.... Negotiations would not have worked, since Hussein did not believe he would be attacked." Halliday cites no evidence to support his assertions.

We will never know if negotiations would have worked, largely because Bush dismissed numerous offers of a diplomatic solution out-of-hand, while the corporate media quietly downplayed or suppressed Iraqi offers to withdraw from Kuwait. Meanwhile, "experts" like Halliday counseled U.S.-British military intervention, amplifying Bush's false analogies to Nazi Germany's expansionism in the process.

If sanctions "failed," they did so precisely because the U.S. was not willing to allow Iraq a face-saving exit. Curiously, sanctions are working all too well in the war's aftermath.

Halliday concedes that the "anti-Hussein forces" committed atrocities ("unjustifiable actions"), but disputes "whether this made the war as a whole illegitimate." What made the war immoral was the American-British rejection of other solutions. Assuming the U.S. was acting on principle (i.e., opposing aggression and occupation), which it was not, as can be easily demonstrated by its support for aggression and occupation elsewhere, then the war against Iraq (and its infrastructure) was unjustified on the grounds that peaceful solutions to the conflict went untested, and the slaughter went well beyond its professed objective. For example, Reuters reported recently that the Basra power plant was bombed 13 times by Kuwait's liberators—"the final raid came on February 28, half an hour before the cease-fire" (*Detroit Free Press*, Jan. 27).

Halliday claims the left is beset by many "myths" about the war. The war, he notes, "generated a great deal of political and

moral confusion." Thanks in large measure to pundits like Halliday, one might add.

Nabeel Abraham
Dearborn, Mich.

The real tragedy

GOOD GOD, BURIED ALIVE? I KNEW THAT HUNDREDS of thousands of people died one year ago during the Persian Gulf War. And, like many Americans, I had become numb to their suffering. But I never realized how agonizing those deaths had been until I learned that thousands of Iraqi soldiers died of suffocation when they were buried alive in their trenches.

When I consider that unthinkable horror, I can't help but remember an analysis I read early on in the war. It described how President Bush had dodged his diplomatic options throughout the pre-war crisis.

Diplomacy is the art of getting the other guy to do what you want—and making him believe it was his idea. Maybe diplomacy wouldn't have worked with Saddam Hussein. He's obviously an irrational monster.

Sometimes it's impossible to reason with monstrous tyrants. But sometimes diplomacy (backed by military muscle) can achieve remarkable results. Remember how John Kennedy handled Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Khrushchev backed down and millions of people survived.

The tragedy of the Gulf War is that those deaths might have been avoided. Because we failed to pursue diplomacy, the real tragedy is we'll never know.

Jeffrey Alan Bullock
Downingtown, Pa.

Joke

IN A BOLD AND VISIONARY ACT, REMINISCENT OF past witch-hunts, excommunications and heresy trials, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has "condemned" Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-NE) for telling "an anti-lesbian joke" (*ITT*, Dec. 25).

Not finding the joke particularly offensive myself, and being a supporter of some of the senator's positions, I, too, wish to be "condemned" and am herewith submitting my own offensive joke:

Q: How many members of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation does it take to screw in a light bulb?

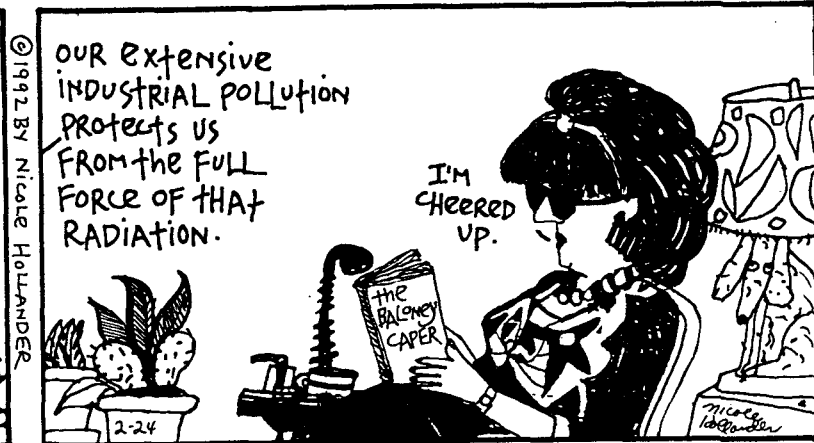
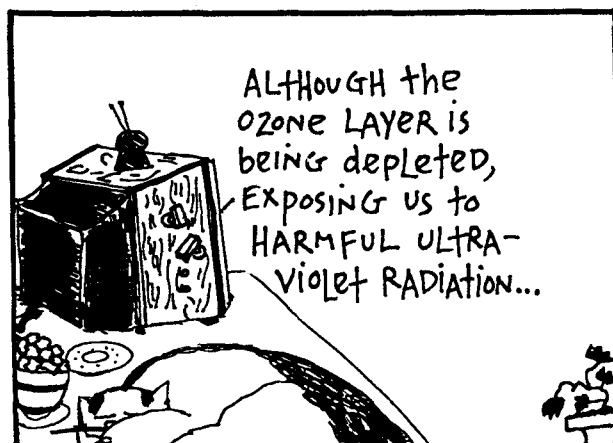
A: THAT'S NOT FUNNY!

While I am not sure just what form my condemnation will take, I am hoping that it will be an attractive certificate suitable for framing.

P.S. Why did the two heterosexuals cross the road?

Ian Watson
Rochester, N.Y.

SYLVIA



By John E. Borsos

IN DECEMBER, GENERAL MOTORS BOLDLY announced its plans to cut its American workforce by more than 70,000 people, touching off a flurry of editorials, news articles and television stories. Remarkably, amid all the recent controversy regarding the auto industry, the once-powerful United Auto Workers (UAW) and its president, Owen Bieber, have been noticeably silent in the escalating national dialogue.

Ironically, GM Chairman Robert Stempel was one of the very few who expressed concern with the role of the UAW in the automaker's future. When he announced the dramatic cutbacks, Stempel said he wanted to work with the current UAW leadership—Owen Bieber and the head of the union's GM department, Steve Yokich. This off-hand remark—a corporate executive expressing his preference of union leadership—should have set bells ringing among rank-and-file UAW members, particularly when the downsizing announcement elicited little protest from Solidarity House, the UAW's international headquarters. The announcement was especially disastrous for GM's hourly employees since the company's failure to designate which of the 21 plants it plans to shut down is sure to instigate intraunion competition as locals offer concessions and enhanced productivity to ensure that their's is not the plant hit.

Stempel's approval expresses how completely the UAW is now willing to accept whatever scraps management throws its way. It also helps to explain why the national media has found it unnecessary to talk to the head of the UAW: There is virtually no difference between the corporate and business union agendas. But the failure of the alternative press, including *In These Times* (David Moberg, "Can Detroit overcome its car sickness?" Jan. 22) to consider the role of the union is puzzling, considering that for the first time in more than 40 years, the presidency of the UAW is being openly challenged in a national campaign, making it necessary, in Stempel's estimation, for him to declare his preference.

A fresh perspective: The alternative is Jerry Tucker, an avowed progressive. Seemingly, the '90s are a decade ripe for union insurgents. In 1990, Ken Coss won the presidency of the United Rubber Workers on a platform opposed to the concessionary tactics of his predecessor Milan Stone. Last December, Ron Carey dramatically captured the Teamsters' presidency. If reformers could win the Teamsters, then perhaps no union was invulnerable. But where Coss and Carey are committed to winning better contracts and benefits, Tucker's candidacy, as part of the New Directions Caucus, offers a fresh perspective to the contemporary debate. Where others, in knee-jerk fashion, join in Iacocca-esque Japan bashing, New Directions centers its blame on those most responsible for the plight of the auto industry—the corporations themselves.

Speaking to a group of autoworkers in Cleveland after he formally announced his candidacy for the UAW presidency on January 31, Tucker squarely focused the blame: "The Big Three, GM especially, didn't want to compete for the small-car market because there is more money to be made in building bigger cars. They don't really build

It's time for Auto Workers to look for New Directions

cars—they make profits." Through the '70s, this was less of a problem as the small-car market remained small. But more recently, the implications of the Big Three's myopia has proved too damaging for the domestic auto industry as American consumers have clearly indicated their preference for fuel-efficient, safe, well-engineered cars.

Unfortunately for autoworkers, the once militant UAW has capitulated to the corporate agenda. Where the union once pushed the industry to build safer and more fuel-efficient cars, it now joins corporate efforts to lobby Congress to relax fuel standards, pollution emissions and other regulations that business leaders say inhibit competitiveness and cost jobs.

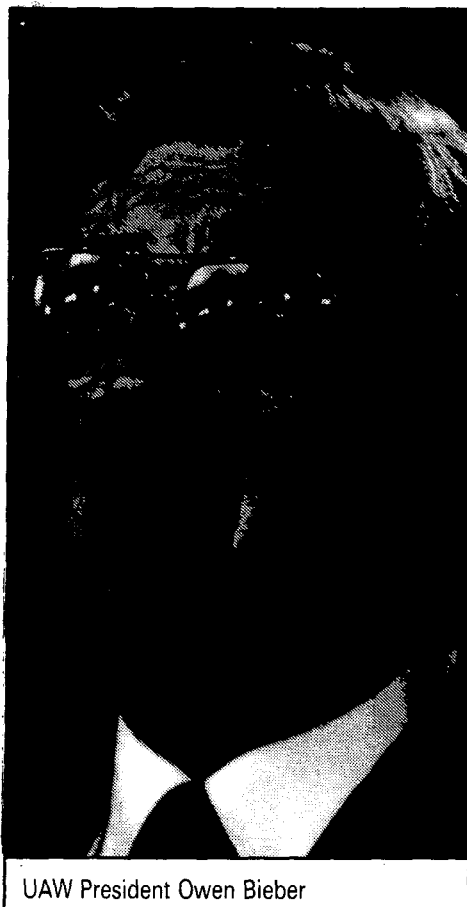
"That's crazy," Tucker says. "If you force the corporations to build safer cars, you save jobs." Lost in the rhetoric, Tucker points out, is the fact that the Japanese are able to produce such vehicles. And, according to Tucker, those who say that American autoworkers are lazy and ignorant are just plain wrong. It's the cozy relationship between the company and the union that has immobilized the UAW, leaving it unable to pose an alternative to the corporate agenda, Tucker says.

Characteristically, the New Directions agenda is an end to the labor-management "jointness" programs. Rather than make workers more competitive, contends Tucker, it "makes people afraid and atomized. People are afraid that they'll lose their jobs, and the union played a part in that." It is no revelation that the auto industry has been ailing lately, but it is often overlooked that the costs have been borne largely by the hourly workforce.

Despite concession bargaining and "jointness" programs, the number of hourly workers continues to dwindle. UAW membership has fallen from 1.4 million in 1979 to 930,000 today. Contract provisions that preclude closing plants during the life of a collective-bargaining agreement are ignored, work rules are renegotiated and plants are pitted against each other to retain the decreasing number of jobs. And, contrary to its progressive past and its prominent role in the American labor movement, the leadership of the UAW seems to be doing nothing to turn this situation around. This has been the impetus for the creation of the New Directions Caucus and Tucker's candidacy. In the past, Tucker says, "the union didn't win them all, but they fought most of them."

Fighting back: Jerry Tucker, now 53, began his UAW career as an hourly worker at the GM Assembly in St. Louis. Holding a variety

The reform unionists blame the auto industry's plight on shortsighted corporations.



UAW President Owen Bieber

of local union offices, he was appointed by Walter Reuther to the UAW international staff in 1970. By the late '70s, he was the UAW's Washington legislative coordinator. In 1980, he returned to the St. Louis district to become a service representative and assistant regional director in UAW Region 5.

In that capacity, Tucker drew notice for initiating a series of innovative workplace strategies that enabled rank-and-file workers successfully to challenge concessionary contracts without having to strike. The linchpin of Tucker's strategies was "working to rule," in which workers performed their jobs just as their work manuals and job descriptions prescribed them to be carried out rather than utilizing the shortcuts workers naturally develop on the shop floor.

Significantly, Tucker's successes in fighting concessions, especially in the aerospace industry, occurred as the international union was giving away the store to the car companies. Initially, Tucker believed concessions "were a strategic retreat," a device for the union to catch its breath before once again taking on the companies. But by the mid-'80s, he and others came to believe that the union lacked a constructive policy. In 1986, Tucker was drafted to run as director of UAW Region 5, where he was declared defeated in a controversial election marred by numerous discrepancies. Taking his case to the Department of Labor, after a two-year court battle Tucker was installed as the Region 5 director, just a few months before the term was to expire. In 1989, he campaigned for re-election and was defeated after intense politicking by the administration caucus, which pressured each of the nearly 800 UAW staff members to contribute \$500 to defeat Tucker.

Following Tucker's defeat, New Directions organized in 1989 as a national movement and Tucker was elected its national or-

ganizer. In November, the national New Directions Movement ratified a 1992 convention platform and drafted Tucker to run for the international presidency. Since its founding in 1989, the New Directions Movement has achieved a following in every UAW region in the country. Among the movement's most vocal supporters has been Victor Reuther, who urged the running of an opposition candidate to get the issues into public debate. Unlike many reform candidacies in which the office seekers' primary campaign message has been to do a better job than his opponent or to clean up shop, Tucker's is an issues-oriented campaign.

The New Directions 1992 platform has five main points: internal democratization and reform; more equitable collective bargaining; organizing the unorganized; political relationships and the UAW's relationship to other unions and community allies; international labor solidarity.

The most important is democratization and reform. Using the Teamsters' effort as a model, New Directions is demanding a one-person, one-vote structure for the international. At present, rank-and-file members elect delegates who then vote for the president at the national election. New Directions proposes referendum balloting by the entire membership for all members of the international executive board. It also advocates electronic voting by delegates at the national conventions to make roll-call voting more readily accessible and as a way to ensure delegates' accountability to their constituents in the shop. At present, according to Tucker, the UAW "is a one-party state." As one New Directions pamphlet states it, "Russian citizens can have glasnost and perestroika and new freedoms—why can't UAW members?"

A new vision: Tucker and New Directions are most significant in that they promise to re-establish labor as a major force of social change. "We are offering," Tucker writes, "a new vision of democratic unionism for the '90s and into the 21st century based on solidarity among workers, not with bosses." This vision includes both solidarity with other international labor organizations and with pre-existing community groups here in the U.S., particularly with environmental activists. New Directions is firmly committed to national health insurance and is exploring the possibility of independent political action. As Tucker told the Cleveland autoworkers, "I view unionism as community. It provides a source of solidarity and community."

Undoubtedly, a candidate running on such a platform faces an uphill fight in a less-than-democratic union election. Like Carey's candidacy in the Teamsters, New Directions faces the challenge of getting its message out to rank-and-file workers in the shops who may be unaware of Tucker's challenge. This task has recently been made more difficult as many local unions have stepped up the date by several weeks of their elections of delegates to the national convention. Traditionally, these elections were held in April or May, before the June convention. This year, some are being held this month.

Concluding his campaign talk in Cleveland, Tucker observed, "It won't bother me a whole lot if I never win another election in the UAW. But it will bother me if the membership doesn't stand up for their union." ■

John E. Borsos is a labor historian who lives in Barberton, Ohio. He is a member of New Directions.

By Alex Molnar

A LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO, PEOPLE IN New Haven, Conn., had a chance to talk to the president. Not the real one. A life-size cardboard image of a young George Bush in his Yale baseball uniform. It was supposed to be a lark, a gimmick, to help promote the local arts council. While facing the photo of the president, people could speak to a video camera set up in the lobby of a building.

The organizers got something very different from the light-hearted entertainment they expected. For eight hours, according to the *New York Times*, one person after another lined up to plead with the president not to forget the average person. Even the mayor stopped by to tell Mr. Bush that our cities are dying. A videotape containing the messages was sent to the White House. At the time the story went to press, no reply had been received.

Although the occasion and setting were quite different, reading the story about the citizens of New Haven took me back to a cold night in January 1991. I spent a good part of that night with my wife and several thousand others quietly walking back and forth on the sidewalk outside of the White House. We were part of the Military Families Support Network vigil for peace in the Persian Gulf. Many of us carried small American flags and a picture of the family member President Bush had sent to the Middle East.

It was like a scene from a movie celebrating American democracy. There we were, mostled middle aged and middle class, patriotic Americans of different races and creeds walking together, presuming to tell our government what to do. Presuming the president would listen. Most of us had never participated in anything like the vigil before. The occasion was somber but the mood was determined and optimistic. The people I was with that evening genuinely seemed to believe, even at that late hour, that Bush could be convinced to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Like the people of New Haven, we were trying to send the president a message.

Three days before our vigil, on the eve of the congressional vote on the use of force resolution, Jim Webb, former Reagan administration secretary of the Navy, had spoken to our group and tried to warn us that we would fail. Too few members of Congress, too few high government officials had a loved one in the military let alone facing combat in the Persian Gulf, he said. Six days after Jim Webb spoke to us, less than 48 hours after our vigil, my son was launching bombers headed for Iraq.

That was Jan. 16, 1991. On February 27, a cease-fire was signed. In April, my son returned to the U.S. Throughout the spring and summer as soldiers came home and confetti flew, the president's approval ratings soared, the politicians, pundits and editors told us we felt good about ourselves again, the cost of the savings and loan bailout skyrocketed and the recession continued without much comment.

Autumn arrived: My son enrolled in college, Saddam Hussein was still in power, Iran was rearming, the U.S. was selling more weapons than ever in the region, the feudal monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had stopped making any democratic noises, the U.S. was more dependent on foreign oil than



Problems that led to war still afflict U.S. in peacetime

at any time in our history, all veterans of Operation Desert Storm were banned from donating blood because a blood infection brought back from the Gulf might pollute the nation's blood supply, the National Coalition for the Homeless reported Desert Storm vets were turning up at homeless shelters across the country, editors and producers were beginning to notice the recession and George Bush, seated in a golf cart, declared that better times were just around the corner.

Winter came: Twenty-eight thousand U.S. troops were still in the Persian Gulf, the Bush administration had yet to reveal the names of American corporations that had helped supply Iraq with the means to wage war and it continued to keep the terms of an agreement signed with the government of Kuwait secret. General Motors announced it would lay off 75,000 workers and the number of Americans without health insur-

ance approached 40 million.

Meanwhile, the stock market climbed to new heights, economists and commentators expressed surprise that Americans were taking the recession so seriously, the president said he would try to avoid doing anything "stupid" and the people of New Haven lined up, confused, worried and hurt, to ask Bush not to forget them.

On Jan. 28, 1992, the president gave his State of the Union speech. It was an answer of sorts to the people of New Haven just as in January 1991 his order to attack Iraq was his answer to millions of Americans who had asked him to pursue peace. In both instances, the president told us that he knows what is best for us. He told us our job is to help him achieve his purposes and trust that everything will turn out all right.

But the same phrases that some had found stirring when Bush took us to war in 1991 now sounded hollow and contrived. It had

Corporate executives, like those who recently traveled to Japan, were anxious to cheer the "heroes" of the Gulf War. It was good PR. Then they walked away from the returning vets. These are the people celebrated for having the "courage" to lay off thousands even as their own pay skyrockets.

become apparent that the president was out of touch. Sadly, George Bush is not the only one. Most of our leaders have little real connection to the lives of ordinary citizens anymore. They have become, as F. Scott Fitzgerald said of the rich, different from you and me.

The Democratic congressional leadership spent months trying to pretend they didn't know the president planned to take us to war, and, when it was obvious to everyone that he did, they pretended that it was too late to stop him. As the recession ground on month after month, the Democratic leadership went on vacation, issued a few press releases, held a few hearings and generally showed only ritual enthusiasm for doing anything about it.

During the Gulf crisis, editors and producers, who most Americans have never heard of, decided what would and would not be news, what was and was not legitimate debate. They kept the newspapers, magazines, radio and television filled with stories and commentaries that set the stage for war in the Middle East and glorified it once it had started. (And many Americans played along, treating the war as a sort of lethal high-tech Superbowl, complete with cheerleaders, pep rallies and breaks for beer and commercials.)

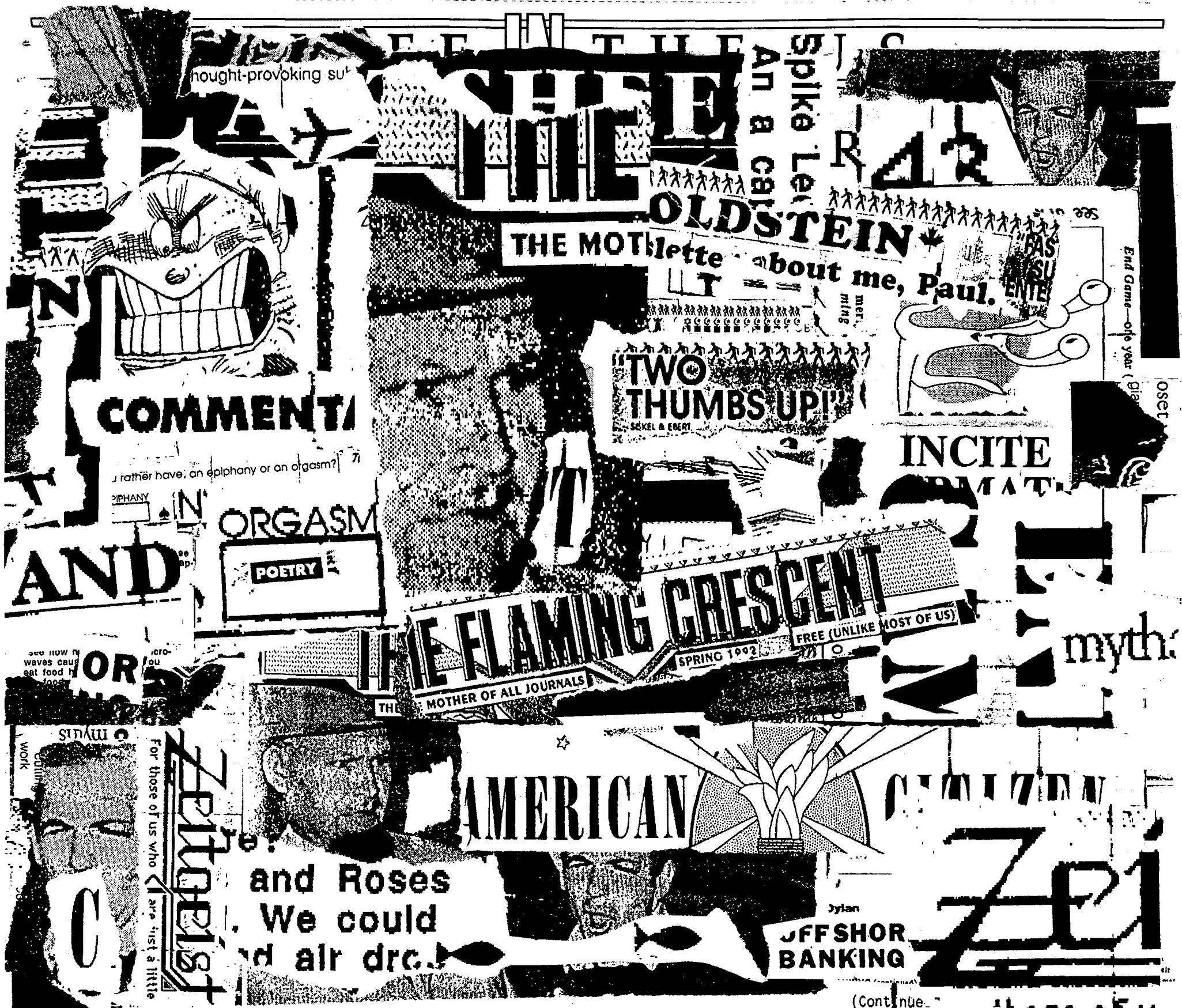
By the time the narcotic effect of the war had worn off, the recession was a year old. Editors and producers then began giving us story after story and essay after essay that tried to tell us hard times were the result of psychological defect, i.e., our irrational fear of consuming. And now, with an election approaching, these same editors and producers have decided who the "serious" candidates for president are and who the front-runner is.

Corporate executives, like those who recently traveled with Bush to Japan, were anxious to cheer the "heroes" of the Gulf War and spend a few bucks on yellow ribbons and parades. It was good PR. Then they walked away from the returning vets. These are people who are celebrated by their peers for having the "courage" to lay off thousands of workers even as their own earnings reach astronomical levels. They are as distant from the human consequences of their decisions as Bush is from his.

George Bush was able to ignore the recession for so long for some of the same reasons he was able to take us to war in the Persian Gulf. For the most part, America's political, social, economic and opinion leaders share his view of the world. Ordinary people, confused and distracted by the media, bullied by their employers and manipulated and divided by politicians who appeal to their prejudices, find it hard to make common cause with one another.

If all we had to do to solve our problems were to defeat George Bush in November, our job would be easy. The more important jobs will be harder. It will be harder to avoid being sidetracked by leaders accustomed to getting their way by turning us against each other. It will be harder to learn to direct the institutions that affect our lives instead of accepting their dictates. It will be harder to reinvent civic culture than defeat individual politicians. But those are the jobs that need doing.

Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, was a founder of the Military Families Support Network.



Withdrawing in disgust is not the same as apathy.

—from the movie *Slacker*

By Mickey Z.

THEY'RE OUT THERE, FROM EVERY part of the country, the proliferation of small press, underground 'zines is becoming too widespread to ignore. Since starting two 'zines of my own, *The Flaming Crescent* and *End Game*, I have witnessed, firsthand, the remarkable growth of this movement.

"I am a firm believer," declares Mark Hand, creator and editor of *Incite Information*, a North Carolina-based 'zine, "in the rather sarcastic adage that freedom of the press belongs to the person who owns one." Hand, a self-described "libertarian-individualist-free-small-market-romantic socialist," says that I.I. ('zine owners love to use initials for their creations) is his attempt to disseminate news and ideas in a libertarian fashion. Hand is not waiting for mainstream media to stop the circus. And he is far from alone.

A generation of free thinkers who

Do-it-yourself mags: some of the news that doesn't fit

were born too late for the '60s—and couldn't relate to the '80s—are finding solace in a withdrawal of sorts from society as a whole. Filmmaker Richard Linklater called them "slackers," but the term does not fairly represent the passion of this cynical indifference. Sure, many of

PUBLISHING

these 'zines are nothing more than a few photocopied pages stapled together, but this movement isn't about style.

"Our work is research on the future," states the founder of *Aquarian Alternatives*, Art Rosenblum, "to find ways to bring a positive future to the planet." Rosenblum's Aquarian Research Foundation is "dedicated to facilitating an age of world peace and

brotherly love," however, Rosenblum's passion becomes apparent when asked if starting his own publication was a response to the shortcomings of the mainstream media.

Truth and advertising: "Mainstream media is controlled by advertisers and caters to sales, so it cannot tell the whole truth. Additionally, people are deluged with misinformation so they don't have time to find out facts for themselves."

What would such facts be?

"If you dared to face reality," Rosenblum responds, "you might discover that the murder of JFK in '63 was actually a takeover of the U.S. by the Nazis who formed the CIA. So, in a Nazi-run state, what would you expect of the media?"

Rosenblum's in-your-face analysis

stands in stark contrast to the editors of *The Stranger*, an anonymous 'zine from Seattle. A self-anointed "critical newsletter," *The Stranger* is published irregularly and serves as a platform for alternative news reporting—items that you'll never see in *USA Today*. To some,

A generation of free thinkers who were born too late for the '60s are finding solace in a withdrawal of sorts from society as a whole.

(Continued) the absence of an editor's name upon which to hang your emotions is a welcome trend in 'zines. Others prefer to be more personal in their underground journalism.

Comfortably numb? Paul Goldstein is the Brooklyn-based editor of *Goldstein: A Newsletter About Me, Paul*. As the name might imply, Goldstein's publication definitely qualifies as "personal." The content runs the gamut from satirical commentary on international events to updates on Paul's endless search for car insurance.

"My newsletter is a forum of expression for me," relays Goldstein. "It's no big political statement, but this 'zine movement has potential. Almost everyone I know went out, got their \$30,000-a-year job, bought a condo and an Acura, and they're content. It's like, let's get some Chinese food, rent a movie and ignore the world. Sit in front of the TV and get numb. I need more than that."

"Living in New York, I check out the tabloids [*Daily News*, *Newsday* and *Post*] now and then. The headlines on all three are essentially the

same. Then, you turn on the TV and get three networks telling you the same exact thing at the same exact time. Only the messengers are different. If that's not state-controlled press, what is? A few publications, like *Mother Jones*, *The Village Voice* and *The Progressive*, offer dissenting views, but I can't always relate to them. So, I started my newsletter to air my feelings."

Goldstein's newsletter fits nicely into a 'zine offshoot called "personal 'zines" or "perzines." Keeping track of a mostly unrecognized trend and its burgeoning offshoots is a monumental task, to say the least. Fortunately, the small press editors have *Factsheet Five*. Published eight times a year by Mike Gunderloy, *FF* regularly reviews as many 'zines as is humanly possible. Gunderloy, who recently sold *FF* to kindred spirit Hudson Luce, told *The Village Voice*, "How many are out there that we don't know about? I'm sure there are hundreds." So, 'zine editors read *FF* religiously to stay in touch with new publications—always on the lookout for "subscription swaps."

A testimonial: "In 1989, I mailed the first issue to 35 people, mostly friends and family," laughs Jennifer Payne, a Connecticut resident and editor of the perzine, *The Latest News*. "Today, there are almost 150

readers from all over the country. *TLN* began as a way to keep in touch with a few friends and family. Thanks to *Factsheet Five*, it developed from a one-page 'letter' to a full-blown national newsletter."

Along with *FF*, there is *Laughing Bear*, a newsletter dedicated to advising small press editors. Tom Per-

Young and unknown writers, previously unable to penetrate the mainstream press force field now have an outlet for their offbeat dissertations.

son, the creator of *LB*, discusses practical how-to information for burgeoning publishers and offers space to promote 'zine news and updates. While many 'zine editors are happy to stay small, some are more ambitious.

"Our goal," declares *Aquarian Alternatives*' Art Rosenblum, "is to build a whole new worldwide society based on small communities, safe energy and abolition of all military systems—in short, the 'rulership of Love,' which some guy referred to as 'the kingdom of God' and got mistreated for that. Eventually, it must come, since no other system can long endure because the nature of the universe is love."

Mark Hand, creator of *Incite Information*, had a more pragmatic motivation. "I started *Incite Information* because I wanted to have sole control over the editorial content, design, direction, etc., of a publication." Clearly, editors like Hand don't start 'zines to follow someone else's agenda, but they often are open to freelance contributors. "I try to publish almost all the material sent to me that is well written, coherent and well argued," states Hand. "However, I do have certain standards and will turn down a submission that I find objectionable. For the most part, I evaluate articles on a case-by-case basis."

Small-ternative press: Just as 'zine editors are proliferating, 'zine contributors are coming out of the woodwork. Young and unknown writers, previously unable to penetrate the mainstream press force field, now have an outlet for their—shall we say offbeat—dissertations. Steve Slack is the founder of *Zeitgeist*, a 'zine "for those of us who are just a little different," which is based in Kalispell, Mont. "I started *ZG* because I was turned on by such groovy rags as Kyle Hogg's *Bold Print*, David Greismann's *Abbey*, and the whole concept of the small press. I decided I wanted to be a bridge between aspiring authors and the general public. I want to publish authors who are writing the truth, so that those

who seek it shall find. No shit. I hope to promote alternative viewpoints of a topic, to provide food for thought, to promote personal responsibility and global consciousness. I'd also like to break even financially while doing all of the above. Pray for me, eh?"

In the past, especially the turbulent '60s, new ideas were welcome, and fervent debate was not only desired, it was expected. Today, popular forums for dissent are scarce, and the small press movement has boldly stepped up to fill the void.

"The small press explosion is a boon to the First Amendment crowd," says Francis Forlenza, a controversial artist and dedicated 'zine reader. "I think it's interesting that many of these publications print poetry. For a while, it seemed that no one bothered with poetry as a form of expression. With all these 'zines, poetry will be the sushi of the '90s."

In some ways, the 'zines have replaced the dog-eared notebook that so many of us have scribbled our deepest thoughts in. We dabbled in prose but shunned attention, fearing rejection. Now, with a sense of community, many of us are exposing what's in our souls and finding that many others share the same concerns for our future.

"Today, we are constantly being fed images of the past," Goldstein adds. "It's like a conspiracy of time. The powers that be have convinced the American people that in order to gain pleasure, we must hark back to better times. That's why there's such an explosion of 'retro' trends. We are encouraged to relive the past, and our icons are dead. Whether it's JFK, James Dean, Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison or Marilyn Monroe, the young people are too busy daydreaming about what was done then to concentrate on what can be done

now."

With the return of *The Addams Family*, *Batman* and *The Brady Bunch*, it's obvious that Goldstein is on to something. In fact, he is trying to start an East Coast chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Time, a West Coast organization attempting to annihilate the current trend toward "retro-culture."

'Zine and herd: A quick glance through *Factsheet Five* will give a nice cross section of the subjects that warrant their own publication. *90% Penguins* is the 'zine that asks, "If the universe is expanding, why does real estate keep going up?" The 'zine for the "sexually adventurous of any gender" is called *Vanilla Milkshake*. Others have more clearly self-defining titles: *Vampire Archives*, *Politically Incorrect*, *Naughty Naked Dreamgirls* and *The Elena Rosa Veiga Torres Newsletter for This World and Beyond*. The last is the creation of Josh Abelson and is a perzine completely dedicated to pining over a lost girlfriend who is a foreign exchange student now back in Spain. Josh also publishes *Cramped*, a music 'zine.

"The mainstream media is basically all bullshit," Abelson states. "People are definitely getting fed up with being handed the same crap over and over again by a media controlled by a powerful few." Hence, Josh started publishing his views as a high school senior.

"Looking back now," Josh relates how *The Elena Rosa*, etc. (try initialing that one) 'zine got its start. "I'm not sure why I wrote the thing. I am an extremely private person, but something snapped in me. I guess something has to, at some point in a person's life." Judging by the 'zine trend, a lot of creative types

are in agreement.

Norman Isbell of Oceanside, Calif., created *The American Citizen* in 1985 after encountering government pressure to close his financial-planning company. "The IRS decided that we were helping too many people avoid excess taxes through tax-sheltered investments," Government harassment increased, he says, when an investigation failed to turn up any improprieties on Isbell's part. Their tactics progressed from a smear campaign to surgical break-ins during which client lists were stolen.

"Due to the Gestapo-like tactics of the criminal element in government (CEG)," Isbell recalls, "we lost almost all our clients." This led to Isbell's journey of education. His study of law was enlightening. "I found that the IRS has no jurisdiction over the lives of sovereign citizens. They can only exercise their power when jurisdiction is waived by the citizen. For example, when you sign the application form for a driver's license—originally intended to license interstate commerce drivers only—you also state that you will automatically accept any government notice delivered to you, even if this notice is fraudulent. *The American Citizen* is a publication dedicated to bringing knowledge like this to the American people."

Almost free and easy: Isbell is encouraged by the rise of alternative 'zines. "The editors of these underground publications will not toe the line and be intimidated. I find this exceedingly refreshing, and it proves that the spirit of our Founding Fathers lives on. As this phenomenon of alternative publications grows, it is my hope that they will become the major media and the CEG will be losing the battle."

Not all 'zine editors concur. Steve Slack of *Zeitgeist* feels that the trend toward small publications is not necessarily a direct result of the shortcomings of today's media. "I think it is a result of American free-spirited stubbornness, a technological and informational explosion, and the sheer number of different, interesting, literate subcultures within this great nation of ours."

Paul Goldstein sees it differently. "You can try to create a network of like-minded individuals. You can try to create a new standard for normality. I think the only way all these little publications will change anything is if they make that happen. The system hates community."

Community is precisely what the 'zine movement is offering. Isolated individuals get the opportunity to interact. This has led to the startling discovery of just how many people are thinking similar thoughts. World-changing views have previously sprung up from such humble, grassroots beginnings. What ultimately results from the 'zine explosion is still open to conjecture. For now, it's encouraging just to know that others are thinking, questioning, creating and challenging.

Mickey Z. is an editor and poet living in New York.

In their own write

As you might expect, the editors of the 'zines featured here welcome any and all correspondence.

• Incite Information

Mark Hand, 1507 E. Franklin St., #530, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

• The Stranger

P.O. Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103-1848.

• Goldstein: A Newsletter About Me, Paul

Paul Goldstein, P.O. Box 9103, L.I.C., NY 11103.

• Aquarian Alternatives

Art Rosenblum, 5620 Morton St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

• The Elena Rosa Veiga Torres Newsletter for This World and Beyond and Cramped

Josh Abelson, Pitzer Box #008, 1050 N. Mills Ave., Claremont, CA 91711.

• The American Citizen

Norman Isbell, 3915 Mission Ave., #7-410, Oceanside, CA 92056.

• Zeitgeist

Steve Slack, P.O. Box 1006, Kalispell, MT 59903.

• The Latest News

Jennifer A. Payne, P.O. Box 245, Clinton, CT 06413.

• Laughing Bear

Tom Person, P.O. Box 36159, Denver, CO 80236.

• Factsheet Five

Hudson Luce, P.O. Box 1163, Cincinnati, OH 45201-1163.

• End Game

Mickey Z., P.O. Box 9103, L.I.C., NY 11103.

—M.Z.



By Mark G. Judge

DUST OFF THOSE BARF BAGS—it's grammy time again. Despite erstwhile alternative act R.E.M. garnering seven nominations—for *Out of Time*, their dumbest album to date—the grammy nomination process has offered up another crop of uninspiring artists whose selections are based solely on sales. This is an in-

MUSIC

dusty that would genuflect before Saddam Hussein if he moved a few units of product.

Of course, occasionally a corporate superstar stumbles on something aesthetically pleasing and even worthy of praise, but for the most part, this year's ceremony will be all Axl Rose's psycho blabbering and Michael Bolton's sadistic hog-calling. (Why don't they just join forces so we can hate them at the same time? Guns 'n' Bozo, anyone?)

Therefore, just as I did in this space last year, I present my own awards—the LAMAs (Little America Music Awards). These are the albums I spin while the grammies are on (I turn the sound down on the television) and are, in my opinion, the best releases of 1991. One note: Compilations, even brilliant ones like Bob Dylan's *The Bootleg Series*, Ray Charles' *The Birth of Soul* and the Pet Shop Boys' *Discography*, are not eligible.

#10. The Wonder Stuff—*Never Loved Elvis*. An ebullient, veddy English album that crosses the angry guitar chops of the Clash with the fiddles and Beautiful Boozer defiance of the Pogues, *Never Loved Elvis* wins this year's award for Best Album Title. (Just don't play Memphis!) Surprisingly sophisticated, *Never Loved Elvis* is a cavalcade of drunks ("The Size of a Cow"), transvestites ("Welcome to the Cheap Seats") and dead-beats ("Caught in My Shadow") that singer/guitarist Miles Hunt infuses with cheeky pathos.

#9. Metallica—*Metallica*. The four weeks this album spent at No. 1 was the second biggest shock of the year, right behind Nirvana's (continuing) chart domination. Mistakenly relegated to Spinal Tap status by Metal-hating alternative-radio types, leader James Hetfield's industrial tales of terror and abuse are truly hair-raising. Though occasionally short on melody, *Metallica* is a high-octane, head-bangin' steamroller.

#8. Kirsty MacColl—*Electric Landlady*. Eclectic landlady is more like it. MacColl is married to Big Time producer Steve Lillywhite, but charges of nepotism die fast after one spin of this multicultural, dance-pop Latin hodge-podge. Guests include the Pogues, Electronic's Johnny Marr and perennial popster Marshall Crenshaw, but the star is plainly Kirsty, who's narrow vocal range is more than made up for by her

songwriting talent and easy hopscotching of musical styles.

#7. Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians—*Perspex Island*. The blessings the pop muse withholds from most performers—intelligence, wit, whimsy—nearly became a curse of abundance for Robyn Hitchcock. He almost forgot the cardinal rule of pop—keep it simple—before breaking through with the basic pop pleasures of *Perspex Island*. Straightforward, charged with guitar-driven hooks and just smart enough, this is the sound of indie-pop breaking

through to the top 40 with its boots on.

#6. Electronic—*Electronic*. America never quite got this. In the States,

Judge's edict: Turn down the sound on the TV and spin your own winners.

dance music is banished to the r&b or disco bins; but in England it's considered a legitimate, even vital, genre. This coupling of New Order's Bernard Sumner and former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr was the towering, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink dance-pop record of the year, and its icy synthesizer bleeps and grunts ironically boasted more subtlety and genuine feeling than a hundred so-called "real" bands. I guess it's all in the groove.

#5. Straitjacket Fits—*Melt*. This Australian quartet knocked Nirvana

it of my top 10 this year. Maybe getting old—and, don't get me wrong, Nirvana's nuclear-powered breakthrough, *Nevermind*, is a great record—but I found the brittle despair coursing through *Melt* the more affecting low-light of the year. It's the eatles semi-coherent, gorgeously morose and crawling through the wreckage of suicides, rainy nights and broken hearts with hushed melodies that dissolve into brilliant hooks and contorted, squealing guitars. Or something like that. Achieving an almost otherworldly dislocation, *Melt* is eerie and uplifting.

#4. Shudder to Think—*Funeral at the Movies*. People will accuse me of caving in to hometown pressure (Shudder are from Washington, D.C.), but these four guys could be from Saskatchewan and I'd still say they were the find of the year. And when every band is trying to emulate this ready mix of churning guitars and androgynous, cascading vocals in a few years, just remember you heard it here first.

#3. Billy Bragg—*Don't Try This at Home*. As with my Shudder to Think pick, on this one I'll be accused of harboring personal bias for reasons that have nothing to do with reality. Sure, I like Uncle Bill's politics, but if he worked for Pat Buchanan, he'd still write a fetching love song. The politics just make it that much sweeter.

#2. Matthew Sweet—*Girlfriend*. There's been a lot of talk about guitars in this year's round-up, so it's only fitting that *Girlfriend*, the most impressive guitar-driven pop album of the year, is near the top of the list. The heroes—aside from Sweet, of course, who could write pop songs in his sleep—are guitarists Robert Quine and Richard Lloyd (the former a rising star, the latter a former member of seminal underground group Television), who pump Sweet's catchy little tunes up with bone-crunching riffs, punk aggression and a real blues sensibility.

#1. Van Morrison—*Hymns to the Silence*. I might catch hell for this. The argument—which I've made several times—is that pop is supposed to be for the kids, man. That it's supposed to be transient and catchy and thumb its nose at the hoary bastards that pollute the lite rock stations, and that the older guys should step down before becoming caricatures of themselves, which Van Morrison was dangerously close to doing. Instead of sliding into parody, he made a monkey out of his critics. *Hymns* is beyond pop, and truly astounding in its breadth and ambition. Every musical style is represented on these two discs: blues, jazz, gospel, rock, pop. Sadly, *Time* magazine was the only media to recognize this as a masterpiece. I'm adding *In These Times* to the list. ■

Mark G. Judge is broke. If *ITT* doesn't pay him soon, he'll have to sell his records.

Tony Moon

Michael Levine

Matthew Sweet and Robyn Hitchcock: two winners who won't be grabbing any Grammys.

Some 'unsound' advice for enduring the Grammy Awards

Mississippi Masala

Directed by Mira Nair

By Pat Aufderheide

FILM

FINALLY, MULTICULTURAL GETS sexy. In *Mississippi Masala*, the latest film by Mira Nair (who went big time, after four well-received documentaries, with the provocatively entertaining *Salaam Bombay!*), some of the most difficult and explosive issues of our time meet in bed.

Mina (the sultrier-than-life Sarita Choudhury) is the child of Ugandan Indians deported by Idi Amin. Having spent her life on the road, she's ended up in Mississippi helping to run a motel. While her mom (renowned Indian actress Sharmila Tagore) runs a small liquor store, her dad (Roshan Seth, who looks permanently pained) writes endless letters to a deaf Ugandan bureaucracy demanding restitution for his property.

Demetrius (Denzel Washington) runs a carpet-cleaning business. He's precariously triumphing over discrimination through charm and hard work. His father (Joe Seneca), the patriarch of a proud family at home, turns obsequious servant at his job as a waiter.

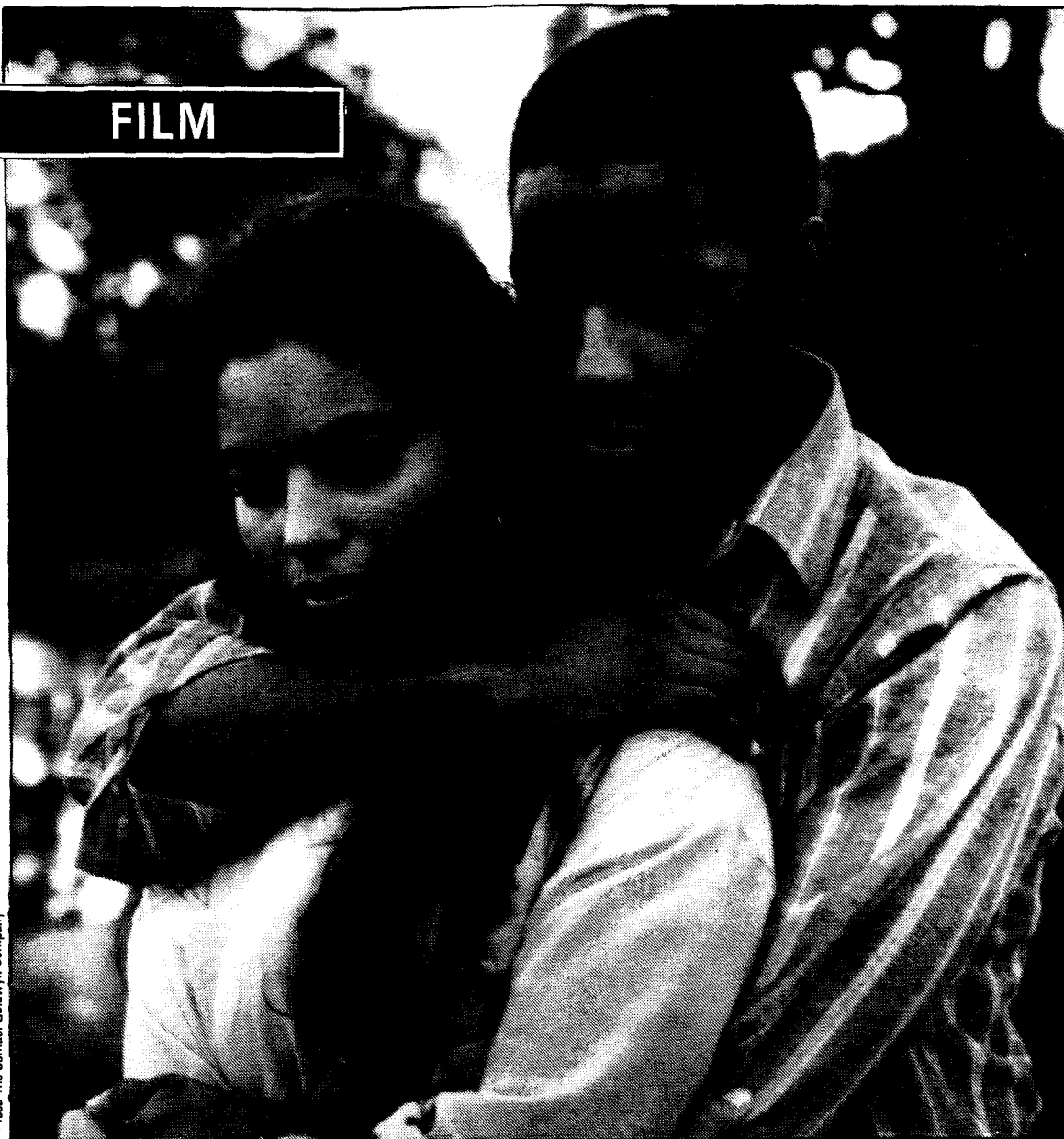
High on hybrids: The lovers meet when Mina's car plows into Demetrius' van while she's bringing home supplies from the Piggly Wiggly for a traditional Indian wedding. And from then on, they're on a collision course with cultural expectations.

Mississippi Masala is a welcome relief from the raging identity politics that flourish in hard times. Depending on entrenched biases and social wounds for its plot twists, the movie also lifts you out of cliché and knee-jerk politics of the victim. It arrives at a time when the only-recently-hot buzzword "multicultural" is being one-upped by the even more hip "hybrid"—a recognition at least that crossing boundaries and formation of new cultural expressions is intrinsic to a polycultural society.

Mississippi Masala from the title onward ("masala" means a mixture of spices) is about hybridization and its discontents. The hybridization is there in the music, the dress, the food and the signs and ads glimpsed out of the corner of an eye, on two continents where the later 20th century has been a story of cultural conflict and conglomeration.

Although it has a youthful exuberance that's infectious, the film also dramatizes the pain of social relations conducted under the power warps of ethnicity, race and class. (Interestingly, although it was written and directed by women, the film is relatively unconcerned with gender and power.) Not only is nothing as simple as black and white, the reason it's much more complex has everything to do with the fact that black and white are powerful categories. Nair has said, in fact, that whites are a "powerful absence" in the film.

Mina's is only the most recent generation to grapple with problems of



Sarita Choudhury and Denzel Washington star in a savory hybrid of race and class.

When the American melting pot threatens to boil over

identity and interaction in the overseas Indian community. Her father, as we see in flashbacks, has never forgiven his best friend from childhood for telling him, on the eve of deportation, that Africa was now for Africans. As the father points out again and again in the film, he was born in Uganda. Nonetheless, when a Ugandan soldier searches his wife's possessions as they leave, what's on the tape player is a song caroling, "My heart is pure Hindustani." When his daughter accuses him of racism, he denies it—his own bitter life experience, he asserts, makes him fear for her.

Hue and cry: In Mississippi, Indians call themselves people of color when it's convenient, but the designation definitely stops at the bedroom door. The intersection of color and class within the community is signaled in a revealing aside, when one of the wedding guests whispers, about the dusky Mina and her prospects for dating a well-appointed young man, that you can be dark and wealthy or light and poor, but you can't be both dark and poor and get the golden boy. Those feelings in the community balloon when Mina's caught with Demetrius.

But there's an irresistible affinity between an Indian who's never been to India and an African-American who's never been to Africa. It's an affinity the plot and especially the dialogue (both by Soonie Taraporevala, Nair's partner as well in *Salaam Bombay!*) belabors overmuch but that electricity between Choudhury and Washington transmits efficiently. They are attracted, it seems, by a similarity of otherness. One of

the sharpest defining characteristics of Demetrius' community is racial and class oppression, such that even Demetrius' mild economic success becomes taken by his own as a sign of betrayal, of cooptation and uppityness.

Nobody's entirely a hero here, and cultural experience is not deified or demonized. The complexity of the Indian overseas culture is drawn with greater detail and assurance than the southern African-American, not surprisingly. The incense-heavy ceremonies, the small concerns (is Mina wearing the right shoes for a wedding?), the intercultural rivalries are emphatically delivered. And the filmmakers clearly delight in making virtual caricatures of some of their male Indian characters, including the uptight groom, the oily "fixer" and the factotum.

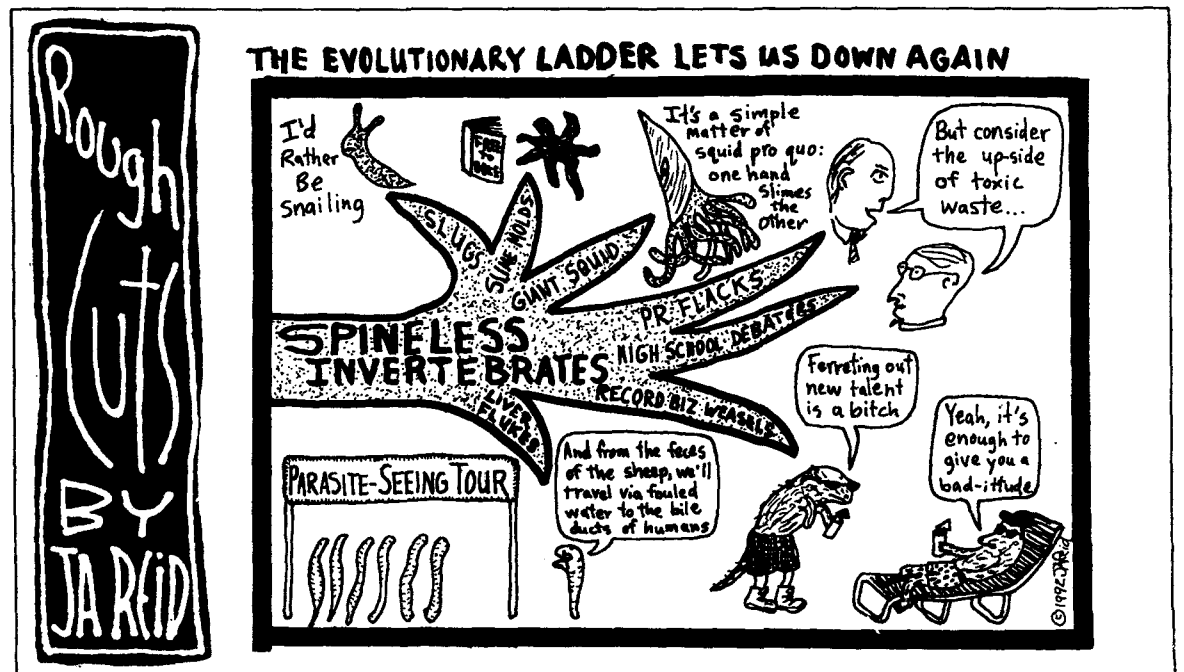
There's more caution in portrayal of Demetrius' family—the gentle, stubbornly good dad, the motherly aunt. And although there's also a leering cousin and a dropout-into-the-drug-culture brother, the film's creaky qualities show through more in their portrayals than with the Indians.

The film is not seamlessly graceful—its pace (no one was shaving those seconds off reaction time) and get-the-message construction, as well as mismatch and slippage in the accents, tend to distance the viewer slightly from the intense psychological realism that is the defining hallmark of the American feature film. But that's not necessarily bad, because *Mississippi Masala* comes across instead as a story told to us in a fresh voice important as a tale with all the metaphorical and allegorical overtones thereof, and not just as a simulation of reality.

So the ending, which hastily ties up a bunch of loose ends both melodramatically and improbably, doesn't betray the film or the viewer. We weren't really expecting the impossible—this cross-race, cross-cultural love affair—to turn into the plausible anyway. We're just grateful for a telling that gave us characters whose individuality was conditioned by but not confined to their social circumstances.

© 1992 Pat Aufderheide

Although it has an infectious youthful exuberance, the film also dramatizes the clash of social forces.



Tsongas

Continued from page 13

Tsongas wants to strengthen existing multi-lateral institutions and create "new mechanisms with sufficient muscle to enforce the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes."

More than any other candidate, Tsongas is ranked by the degree to which U.S. interests

seemed to be at stake in Kuwait. For more than a dozen years, he has hammered away at the need for a comprehensive national energy program emphasizing conservation, development of renewable and non-polluting sources of energy and nuclear power.

Nice to nukes: Yes, nuclear power. When the mainstream media writes about Tsongas being a liberal who is willing to challenge

"liberal orthodoxy," his support for nuclear power is usually exhibit No. 1. Tsongas has long supported the use of fission-generated nuclear power as an acceptable alternative to the continued risks of burning fossil fuels, but only as a medium-term step in a long-range plan to base energy use on renewable resources and fusion. "There are two basic realities about energy facing Americans," he writes in "A Call to Economic Arms." "First, we have no national energy policy (presuming that importing oil does not qualify as such a policy). Second, our energy use is based almost exclusively upon the consumption of finite energy resources (particularly oil) and that is, by definition, unsustainable over the long term."

His support for nuclear power comes in a context of his strong record of genuine concern for the environment. He makes the practical calculation that the possibility of a catastrophic nuclear accident and the difficulty of getting rid of nuclear waste are risks worth taking when balanced against the known health, environmental and national security costs of continued burning of fossils.

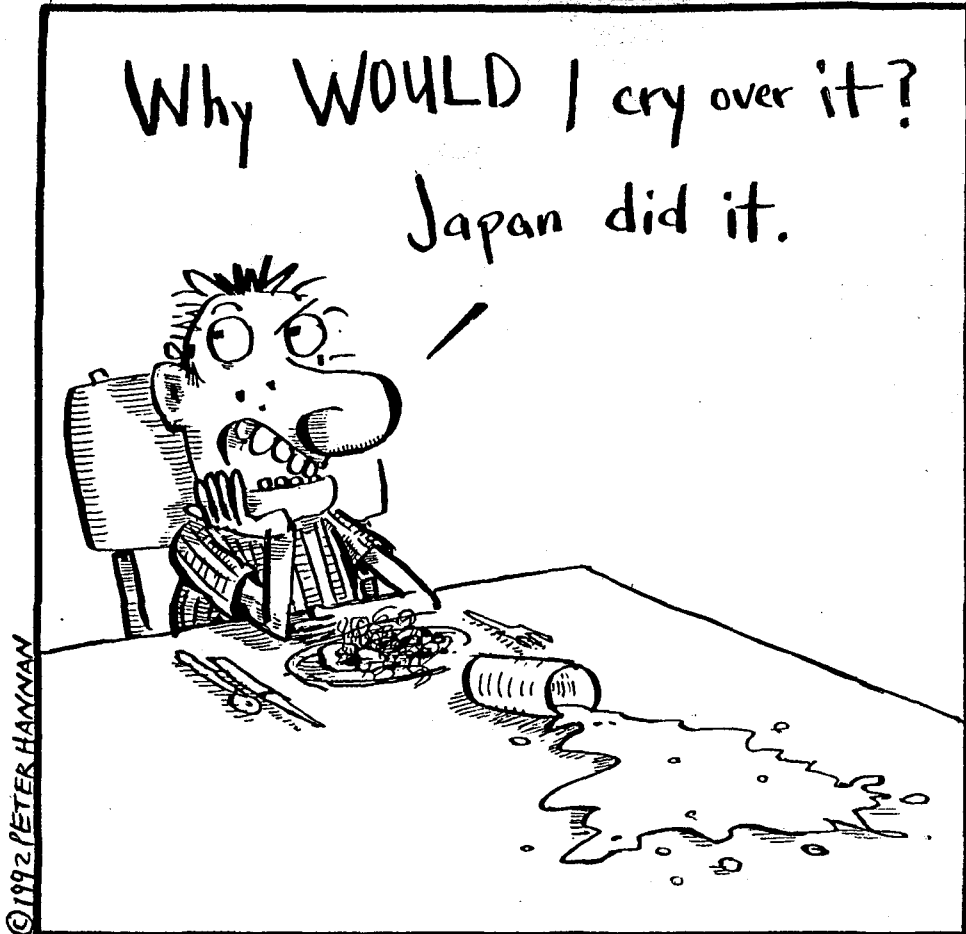
The road ahead: After concentrating his resources on New Hampshire for months, Tsongas now must take his campaign to the

rest of the country. He has raised only half as much money as Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Bob Kerrey (D-NE), and a quarter as much as Arkansas Gov. Clinton. Yet with a pro-business message, with the possibility of tapping into Greek-American donors who have been reluctant to give in the wake of Dukakis' defeat and with national visibility as a result of his New Hampshire surge, Tsongas should have less problem raising money.

Tsongas has only skeletal organizations in other states. He is, however, on the ballot in every state and has filed delegate slates in most.

Moreover, the campaign schedule may give him a boost. The first event after New Hampshire is the February 23 Maine caucus, where Tsongas' regional ties and momentum should mean a strong showing. The South Dakota primary follows two days after Maine, and then, on March 3, four states have either primaries or caucuses. The largest of those is Maryland, which, as a border state, is presumed to be a Clinton stronghold, but where Tsongas has his best organization outside of New Hampshire. If Tsongas can defeat Clinton close to home, it will help to preserve momentum. From that point, he has as good a chance as anyone at the White House. □

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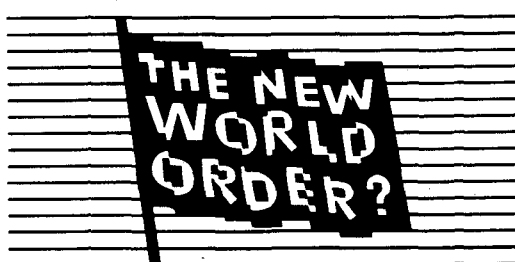
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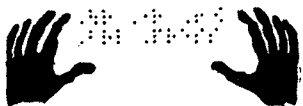
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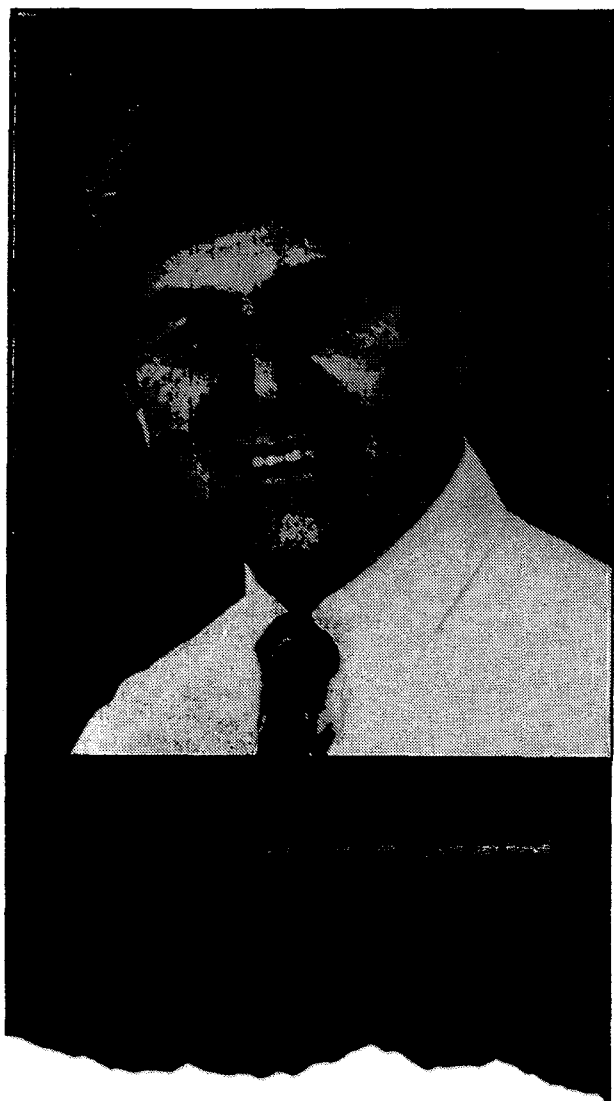
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From front-runner to back burner

By Dean Baker



We've all heard the story by now about the Democratic presidential race. Bill Clinton had it all wrapped up. He was smart, a Rhodes scholar and a graduate of Yale Law School. He had experience as a governor. He was known as an innovator in Arkansas, and he wanted to do for the rest of the country what he'd done for Arkansas. He apparently dealt with the media well; it seems they had a great deal of respect for Clinton. Most of all, he positioned himself as a non-ideological pragmatist. This made him far more electable than those "liberals" challenging him for the nomination.

I was willing to accept this story as the truth. I was all set to sign up for the campaign and get my Clinton button and bumper sticker, but for some reason I hesitated. Something didn't seem right, something didn't add up. I recounted the story again and again in my head, and while I couldn't put my finger on it, I knew there was something wrong. Finally I realized the problem: I had heard it all before.

A pragmatic, non-ideological governor, solid record, electable; that's right, it's Michael Dukakis. I quickly ran through some old clippings from the 1988 campaign. I found a *New Republic* from the fall of 1987. It had an article by Morton Kondracke praising Dukakis' simple "I can win" message, contrasting it with the grandiose promises of the other candidates to effect change. Kondracke said that, first and foremost, the Democrats needed a winner.

He went on: "Besides the message, Dukakis has money, brains, a talented staff, a successful record as governor of Massachusetts (though not quite as spectacularly successful as he claims), a confident television style, the attention and respect of the political press and professional politicians, and the ardent backing of his state and fellow Greek-Americans, an esteemed ethnic group." Somewhat later the article points out that Dukakis "was Phi Beta Kappa at Swarthmore, cum laude at Harvard Law."

BACK FROM THE PASTURE: In my *New Republic* from last fall, Kondracke spoke of Clinton in almost identical terms. Kondracke commented that Clinton can boast of "a national reputation for innovation in state government, especially in education. He has chaired national governors' task forces on education, welfare and health-care reform. More important, he is urging a post-liberal agenda for the Democrats, conceived by the Democratic Leadership Council that he formally headed and designed to win back middle-class white voters who have fled to the Republicans. He's also good looking, affable and smart, and though he grew up in Hope, Ark., he has access to what George Bush derides as the famed Harvard Boutique: His advisers include the economist (and *TNR* contributing editor) Robert B. Reich, and Representatives Stephen Solarz [D-NY] and Les Aspin [D-WI]. He is a former Rhodes scholar and a Yale Law School graduate."

This sounded suspicious; I decided to look further. I found an old *Time* magazine article on the 1988 presidential race. The article talked about how Dukakis was in a battle with Richard Gephardt to define the "post-liberal soul of the Democratic Party." Now I knew I was on to something—Kondracke's piece on Clinton was sub-titled "post-liberal man."

Coincidence? Then how do you explain the rest of the article, including the sentence, "Dukakis is an exemplar of the new-breed Democratic governors who was forced to develop innovative programs in the face of fiscal constraints and a restive electorate." I checked further and found that one of the Clinton advisers mentioned by Kondracke, Robert B. Reich, had also been an adviser for Michael Dukakis.

There is too much here for it all to be a coincidence. Clearly, there was some extraordinary connection between Bill Clinton and Michael Dukakis. I remembered

that Bill Clinton had given the nominating speech for Dukakis at the 1988 convention (a speech famous for the line that drew loud applause, "in conclusion"). I went and checked the videotapes of that speech. After examining the tape carefully in slow motion, and producing several still photos of the climactic moments, I realized that Bill Clinton and Michael Dukakis were never on stage at the same time. When Clinton finished his speech, he left the stage for at least 54 seconds before Michael Dukakis came on. At no point were they filmed together.

QUICK CHANGE OR NO CHANGE? I decided to consult an expert. I asked Mr. X (since he fears for his safety, I agreed not to use his name), "Suppose the unthinkable is true—suppose Bill Clinton really is Michael Dukakis—would it be possible to change personas that quickly?" To determine the answer to this question, he conducted a series of tests in which he had an actor change suits, remove a set of shoulder pads, take off a hair piece and put on a fake nose. After allowing him some time to practice the procedure, Mr. X found that he could regularly perform the switch in less than 43 seconds; ample time to leave a stage as Bill Clinton and return 54 seconds later as Michael Dukakis. Clinton's Southern drawl turned out to be a relatively simple affectation for 90 percent of the subjects tested.

Now there was evidence, and there was also opportunity, but the question of motive still remained unanswered. Who would be behind this Dukakis-Clinton candidate and how could they get all the media pundits to sell him to the public? Mr. X told me to "follow the money," but left me to proceed alone, saying, "It's too dangerous for me to go any further." While I trusted Mr. X's advice, the effort to follow the money just left me stumped. Who stood to gain financially from having another presidential race with Michael Dukakis as the Democratic nominee? I thought about all the special interest groups that might gain from a Dukakis victory. I even checked over his list of campaign contributors. There was no one who stood to gain enough in any obvious way to justify such an elaborate conspiracy.

Then it all came together. I had been looking at it from entirely the wrong angle. They didn't stand to gain by Dukakis winning; they stood to gain by him running. Suddenly it became clear, the television networks were behind it all. By running their Dukakis-Clinton candidate again, there would be another presidential election that no one would care about. There would be nothing to distract people from the networks' newest set of prime-time offerings.

This explains how they could be so sure that the Clinton-Dukakis changeover at the 1988 convention would take place well out of the view of the cameras. (Apparently, the camera crews were given strict instructions to remain focused on the podium, no matter what they saw going on behind the stage.) The other media conglomerates were probably in on it, too. A boring campaign will mean more people have to go to the movies for entertainment. Also, by bringing Time-Warner and the other heavy hitters on board, they could assure their Dukakis-Clinton candidate of lots of good coverage through the primary campaign.

So there it is. The democratic process is being subverted again by those who would bore us into watching their sitcoms and Schwarzenegger films. I know that by exposing this conspiracy I am putting my own reputation and life in jeopardy. These people are ruthless; they will do anything to discredit me and might even resort to murder if it would serve their ends. I have to speak the truth, though. We can't let them get away with it again. ■

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